

**A STUDY ON KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF ACTION RESEARCH
AMONG THE EFL TEACHERS: THE CASE TO FIVE HIGH SCHOOLS OF
CENTRAL ZONE OF TIGRAY REGIONAL STATE**

By

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

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Abstract

This paper tried to examine the knowledge and practice of action research among EFL teachers in five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. The EFL teachers' attitude towards action research and their tendency of using the findings to improve classroom practices were also the aim of this study. To investigate this problem, descriptive type of study method was employed as descriptive method deals with 'what is it' i.e. it describes and interprets what exists at present. Therefore, it was appropriate to describe the current status of action research vis-à-vis the EFL teachers' knowledge and practice in it. With regard to the research methodology, a mixed method approach was used in which the researcher has used both quantitative and qualitative approach and because of wanting of both generalization and detailed view of the current status of action research for individuals. Questionnaires and interviews containing both close-ended and open-ended questions, and document analysis were used in the data-collection process of this research. 25 EFL teachers and five directors filled questionnaires; 8 of these teachers and all the directors were also interviewed. Results from the analysis of data revealed that even though all of the EFL teachers had taken action research and other related courses at colleges and universities, they have no adequate knowledge of action research that could be applied in trying to solve classroom problems and resulted in minimal involvement in action research activities. In addition, they have the problem of fund, time, work load and resource. In spite of all this, they have positive attitude towards action research. The findings from action research done by small number of teachers have not been used and shared among teachers. The findings are kept secret with the researcher, not properly disseminated. As a result, it is recommendable that schools and other concerned bodies to encourage and support teachers to learn and conduct research activities and improve quality teaching. Teachers should also up-grade their action research knowledge and skill by reading different action research references, instead of expecting formal training from ministry of education.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the education system, teachers are one of the most important elements and their responsibilities in schools extend beyond simply implementing and delivering the curriculum: they need to know how to recognize and solve problems that may arise within the classroom when they deliver the curriculum. A qualified teacher should also be aware of, and be able to respond to, the direction of new developments in teaching (Davies, 1995). Besides, in the modern era, effective teaching requires that teachers engage in research in order to improve the standard of their teaching. Moreover, teachers are expected to follow and implement research findings in order to increase the quality of their teaching, and to solve problems that come up in their schools (Demircioglu, 2008). The first question to be raised here is in what type of research teachers should be involved. There may be different types of research that need to be done by teachers to solve school problems. One of them is action research which is one way of carrying out research in the classroom and is more required in schools particularly in classroom context. Best and Kahn (1994) said “if classroom teachers are to be involved in research activities, it will probably be in the area of action research which is done in classroom and to improve classroom practices (teaching learning process)”.

In literature, there are different definitions of Action Research with reference to time and context differences. For example; action research is simply a form of self reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations (i.e. school) in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out in a wider sense (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 162).

When we come to the importance of action research, to start with English classroom, “as English is seen as language of opportunity” Firdissa (2007), it is better to summarize by the following saying;

...for English language teachers, it is convincing that the disposition to the study, as objectively as possible, of the consequences of their own language teaching is more likely to change and improve their knowledge and practices than is reading about what some one else has discovered regarding the consequences of his/her own language teaching experience. The later may be helpful, but the former one is certainly to be (Corey, 1953; 70, as cited in Young, et al, n.d).

In the former, when teachers are exposed practically to scaffold their language teaching, they identify what make(s) them successful or fail in their work plus the language teaching learning process including the students' performance because the phrase 'the consequences of their own language teaching' covers all of them. As Dale's (1969:107) idea, people remember 10% of what they read, 90% of what they say as they do a thing and more than this when they do a real thing. Consequently, it is not difficult to think that by conducting action research, teachers can gain plenty of knowledge and skills about how to improve language teaching and learning practices more than they can get from reading.

In order to come up with the aforementioned benefits of action research, teachers' research practices for promotion and enhancing the quality of teaching learning process become one of the issues highly emphasized by the Ethiopian education policy and its directives. The educational policy directives had designed and put into practices advancement or career ladder schedules for teachers to initiate teachers. This is called career structure. Career structure in this context is a change in the structure of teaching profession that provides teachers to advance and progress in their profession. The purposes of career structure are: to inspire teachers, to attract entrants to the teaching profession, to enhance teacher development and to scale up the quality of teaching learning process (Ashenafi, 2007).

The ultimate goal of designing this career structure in the sphere of education is to improve the provision of quality education in Ethiopian schools. Even though the main thirsty of Ethiopia is economic growth, by and large, education is the eye opener of the country's development in any sector. As education is keystone of development, education also requires other keystones that assure its own development. From those, action research is one and prominent. Conducting action research in classroom and/or schools is comparable with what mirror can help person see his/her face. Derived from this, teachers' engagement in conducting action research is highly recommendable.

Particularly for developing countries like Ethiopia, the need for action research is furthestmost indisputable. As they are found in the route of development, it is basic to educate their citizens. But the citizens of these countries want to get ready made education resulted from lack of accessibility to more modernized technological inputs. Then, to deliver quality education, this needs to call for a systematic investigation into the

sphere of language teaching so as to get rid of the shortcomings found in the area of language teaching learning. This claims the inclusion of action research into language education. But without having the basic action research knowledge, involving in action research and having positive attitude towards it, it is impossible to be familiar with the aforementioned action research value, and by any means it is nothing the existence of action research in the language education. Therefore, knowledge, practices and attitude of EFL teachers in/towards action research as well as their habit of using action research results to improve classroom practice was the main intent of this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The current world trend demands building bridges between teaching and research, calling for the need to empower teachers to extend their roles beyond mere deliverance of knowledge by being vigilant to practice, in practice and changing practice. The intuitive for change needs to be driven directly from the challenges that the teachers face in their respective classrooms. The consequences, therefore, are of immediate relevance to them in practical over and above in academic terms (Firdissa, 2007). In line with this, as Wald and Castleberry (2000), cited in Hailessellassie (2004:25), there is a general agreement that learning to teach is a lifelong process. This notion of ongoing and lifetime professional learning for teachers in all fields is the focus of many several researchers and it is seen providing meaningful professional development for teachers. "A teacher can never truly teach, unless she is learning herself. A lamp never light another flame unless it continues to burn it own flame" (Wald and Castleberry, 2000, cited in Hailessellassie, 2004:25). There may be different strategies which one has to follow his/her profession but one of them is teachers' practical involvement in problem solving and innovative activities, and named as action research.

As Crookes(1993) pointed out that action research is a flexible approach to research and professional development, and its applications to the field of language teaching are potentially numerous. But action research is still relatively new in the field of language teaching although interest in it on the part of policy makers, teacher educators, teacher training organizations and teachers themselves has been developed rapidly since the early 1990s. Burns (2005a) also said that the literature on action research is still rather limited and the use of action research in language classes is new for some English teachers.

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Similarly, today, many teachers are constantly seen challenging with variety problems for which they are required to develop solutions. Few teachers who engage in action research project turn out to be more flexible in their thinking, more receptive to new ideas and thus better able to solve problems (Dinkelman, 1997 as cited in Johnson, 2002; 21). But lots of EFL teachers in our country have not yet. That is why the quality of education in our country's high schools and elementary schools is exponentially deteriorated. Thus, many language teachers are being looked down by their students and a number of students are leaving elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities without the expected knowledge. "The ministry of education of Federal Government of Ethiopia" in its study, the quality and effectiveness of the teacher education system in Ethiopia, (MOE, 2002 as cited in Ahemed, 2008) as research findings conforming that there is deficient professional competence, unsatisfactory content knowledge of teachers, and a mismatch between teacher education and school education in the country.

When we come to the Ethiopian researchers, the work of Cherie (2003), Wondu (2006), Firdissa (2007) and Mekuria (2007) are some of the local researchers who conducted research on the involvement of English language teachers in action research. They have mentioned a lot about the essence of action research in Ethiopian elementary and high schools, and higher institutions.

Although the above mentioned local researchers have conducted research on the involvements of English language teachers in action research, there are things untouched by those researchers. These are: first, they have not studied the knowledge of action research among English language teachers and their participation in different action research trainings. Second, they have not assessed the tendency of EFL teachers in using the action research findings to improve language classroom practices and sharing the findings among the teachers of the same school and the nearby schools, and to create other problem areas because from the very beginning of the essence of action research, it is cyclical. The last but not least is the current research was conducted on unstudied places in so far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned. These were what the current researcher stroke him to conduct research on the knowledge and practice of action research among EFL teachers of five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. As Grasner (n.d) cited in Cherie (2003) also argued and emphasized that EFL

teachers should develop positive attitude towards, and be practical users and producers of change in language teaching.

1.3 Research Questions

This study, with in the context of the five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State, was concerned with the following basic research questions:

- A. do English language teachers of those high schools have knowledge pertaining to undertake action research in English language classroom?
- B. is action research practical among the EFL teachers in classroom?
- C. what is the attitude of EFL teachers towards doing action research?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective:

The general objective of this study was to investigate whether EFL teachers have the knowledge of action research and put into practice the knowledge they have in English language classroom in five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives:

The specific objectives of this study were:

- A. to discover whether EFL teachers of those high schools have knowledge to conduct action research.
- B. to see whether they put their action research knowledge into practice.
- C. to investigate whether EFL teachers have positive attitude towards conducting action research in classroom.

1.5 Significances of the Study

This study could contribute the following significances:

- It may provide insight for EFL teachers to see the level of their knowledge, perception and practice in using action research in their teaching career life to improve classroom practices.
- It may provide relevant data for school principals, teacher trainer organizations and policy makers to give emphasis for this issue as a routine part of language teaching in classrooms.

- It may serve as a starting point for those who want to carryout further study in this area.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

Although action research is necessary to be conducted in high schools nation wide, in this study, the researcher only tried to see five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. The study focused on the knowledge and practice of action research among EFL teachers in these high schools.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The limitation of this study lied on that there was shortage of documents that had been done in English classrooms by EFL teachers. This limited the accessibility of data which were intended to be gathered from secondary sources. Due to shortage of time, there were teachers which were not voluntary to be interviewed. Therefore, shortage of time was also seen as a problem meanwhile the research was on the way.

1.8 Definition of Operational Terms and Abbreviations

Action-research: is the name given to a form of research in which individuals and groups take systematic actions to improve their practice, and then create a research-report in which they show the evidence of development. It is a form of research in which practice precedes the theory of it.

Knowledge: is the acquaintance of EFL teachers with facts, and EFL teachers' awareness and understanding concerning action research. The expertise and skill EFL teachers have on the subject of action research. It also refers the teachers' familiarity with the procedures or steps in conducting action research, and principles, advantages, characteristics, etc. of action research.

Practitioner: a teacher, in fact anyone who is 'practicing' a profession and trying to make it better.

Professional development: refers to actual change or progress in status of employees (teachers) within an organization (the school) as a result of good performance and it also one of the motivation factors.

Reflection: is thinking about one's own behaviors or practice or actions in the past, present or future. It is a problem solving activity by thinking through.

Teacher-researchers: is the name given to teachers who research their practice and make reports about it so that others can learn more about education.
You are teacher-researchers if you do action research.

Abbreviations:

EFL- English as a Foreign Language

AR- Action research

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature review examines recent research studies and acts as a basic for the proposed study. It also explains the need for the proposed work to appraise the shortcomings and/or informational gaps in secondary data sources. This analysis may go beyond scrutinizing the availability or conclusion of past studies and their data, to examine the accuracy of secondary sources, the credibility of these sources and the appropriateness of earlier studies (Cooper et al., 2003).

Therefore, to come to this study, the purpose of research in the social sciences is to generate data that contribute to human understanding of social phenomena. In education, research provides information on multiple phenomena such as the efficacy of various instructional approaches, achievement differences between social groups and across countries, and the many factors that contribute to school improvement generally. It is common to assume that there is a direct relationship between research and both policy and practice. Policymakers and practitioners are usually seen as consumers of research in so far as they apply research findings to the generation of policy and the implementation of more effective practice. To this end, there are different types of research that play their own respective role in the sphere of educational improvement and/or change. But as Best and Kahn's (1994) view, the most closely related and effective type research to education is action research. Hence, five areas of literature informed this chapter—different aspects of action research, action research and education, action research and language teaching, and the status of action research in Ethiopia.

2.1 Definition of Action Research

What is a good definition of the term action research? is an intersection and a question for different researchers in the field. Since the work of Dewey, many researchers give several definitions with minor variations, and also set forth a few requirements separately from these researchers. Ferrance (2000) explained the variations by saying “action research is one of those terms which are heard quite often in today's educational circle. But just what does it mean? If you ask three people to define it, you may find yourself with three different definitions”. But some of those scholars who give definitions for action research are Wallace (1999), Elliott(1991), Hussein(1996) and Mctaggart(1997)as cited in

Johnson(2002), Kemmis and Henry as cited in AllWright (1991;42), Cohen and Manion as cited in Van Lier (1988), Richards and Lockhart (2001;12), Carr and Kemmis(1986), and Bailey and Nunan (1996).

To started with the definition which action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 162). More closely related to the above definition is given by Kemmis and Henry's (1989:12), as cited in AllWright (1941:42), and they define:

Action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve rationality and justice of their own social educational practice, as well as their understanding of the practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. To sum up, action research is concerned with trying to improve one specific point about the related issues of language learning and/or teaching through small-scale researchers by means of a procedural approach and empirical measurement.

Here, it tells that action research as a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by teachers in schools to improve the rationality and justice of their classroom practice.

Elliott (1991:69) also defines action research as 'the study of a social situation with a view to improve the quality of action within it'. The social situation is the classroom. Improving the quality of actions in the classroom means using interventionist techniques and trying them out to reach a better performance. Johnson (2002; 13) seems agree with Elliott's definition and he defines action research as the process of studying a real school or classroom situations to understand and improve the quality of actions or instructions. It is a systematic and orderly way for teachers to observe their practice or to explore a problem and give a possible course of action. He also stated that it is a type of inquiry that is preplanned, organized and that can be shared with others. They define action research as a study.

Similarly, another definition of action research is made by Ebbut (1985), cited in Demerciglu (2008), action research is about the systematic study attempts to improve educational practice by groups of participants by means of their own practical actions and by means of their own reflection upon the effects of those actions. Mills (2003: 5) defined Action Research as follows: Action Research is any systematic enquiry

conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or any stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn.

But according to Wallace (1999; 1,4,15 and 255), there are variety types of definitions of action research with regard to context difference, but when they are merged, they present a cogent whole; action research is a problem based method of professional self-development and undertaken by an individual or small group which involves systematic collection and analysis of data related to teachers every day practice.

Cohen and Manion (1950:174), as cited in van Lier (1988:68), define action research by incorporating its feature as a small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effect of such interventions. They also stated that action research is situational_ context based collaborative_ a joint work between researcher and practitioners, participatory_ all team members participate in the implementation and self-evaluative_ evaluation of improvement on the on going process.

Lastly but not least, Steven (2003) put the following definitions of action research which are given by different scholars. These are:

Action research is a three step spiral process of (1) planning which involves reconnaissance; (2) taking action; and (3) fact-finding about the result of the action (Kurt Lewin'1947).

Action research is the process by which practitioners attempt to study their problem scientifically in order to guide, correct and evaluate their decisions and actions (Stephen Corey, 1953).

Action research in education is study conducted by colleagues in a school setting of the result of their activities to improve instruction (Carl Glickman, 1992).

Action research is a fancy way of saying let's study what is happening at our school and decide how to make it a better place (Emily Calhoun, 1994)

Action research is a frame of mind more than a specific research methodology. It is a democratic problem solving approach researchers take towards their own activities and the areas of concern others bring to them (Jim Parsons, 2002)

Action research is a process for encouraging positive change (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992)

Action research is a form of disciplined inquiry that impact directly on a teacher's practice and empowers them to renew their classrooms and promote instructional improvement (Glanz, 1991).

From the above researchers who give definition for action research, it can be summarized as action research is an inquiry or research in the context of focused effort to improve the quality of an organization and its performance. It is typically designed and conducted by practitioner(s) who cooperatively plan and analyze data to improve their practices. It includes many research methodologies, which pursue action and research outcomes at the same time. Even though some see as study and others see as activity of doing things, it is both.

All the definitions seen above seem to share more commodities than differences, which would possibly characterize action research. These are

- Action research carried out by people directly concerned with the social situation that is being researched.
- The aim of action research seems to focus on investigating specific classroom problems to seek immediate and practical solutions. Action research starts from practical questions arising from everyday classroom work.
- It takes place through the collaboration and participation of practitioners in classroom context.
- The improvement of practice seems to be the major objectives of action research.
- Action research appears to be of help to classroom teacher to build their classroom practices on justifiable grounds.

2.2 Brief History of Action Research

According to Bailey & Nunan (1996; 121), Reason & Bradbury (2004; 38), Elliott (1991), Carr & Kemmis (1986), Johnson (2002), Cherie (2003), and Wonda (2006) the idea of using research in a natural setting to change the way that the researcher interacts with that setting is traced back to Lewin, a social psychologist and educator whose work on action research was developed through out the 1940s in the United State. Even though the practice of using action research to improve the existing practice was manifested in the 1940s, Dewey started to use action research to solve problems since 1933. To him, a solution to a problem could only regard as viable when it was demonstrated to give the

required result in practice-‘practical problem requires practical solution’ (Reason and Bradbury, 2004:38). But Dewey did not coin the term ‘action research’. Credited for this is held jointly by two men working independently (Coiler and Lewin, 1948).

Coiler and Lewin are credited with coining the term ‘action research’ to describe work that did not detach the investigation from the action required to solve the problems chosen for the study directly related to the context of the issue. Reason and Bradbury (2004) stated that from the beginning, Lewin’s process was cyclical, involving a non-linear pattern of planning, acting, observing and reflecting on the changes in the social situations.

In the early 1950s, Dewey’s work started to expand to parts of America and Europe, and Stephen Corey at teachers college at Columbia University was among the first to use action research in the field of education, as cited in Reason and Bradbury (2004), because he believed that the scientific method in education would bring about change as educators would be involved in both the research and the application of information and the value of action research was in the change that occurs in every day practice rather than the generalization to a broader audience. He also saw the need for teachers and researchers to work together. Meanwhile, in the mid 1950s action research was severely attacked by academics as unscientific, little more than common sense and the activities for enjoyment and commenced to decline.

Following the decline of action research in the USA by the mid 1950s, the idea of action research was emerged in UK in the context of school based curriculum development in the 1960s. According to Elliott (1991), “it was from the attempts made by teachers’ involvement in some modern secondary schools in UK to restructure and reconceptualize the humanities and the humanities curriculum that the idea of teachers as researchers, teaching as reflective practice and teaching as a form of inquiry emerged”. In a more strong form by the year late 1970s, educational practitioners questioned the applicability of scientific research designs and methodologies as a means to solve educational issues. The results of many of the formerly federally funded projects which had been assumed to improve educational practices were seen as theoretical, not practical based. Subsequently, action research had gained a significant foothold both within the realm of community-based and participatory action research, and as a form of practice oriented to the

improvement of educative encounters (e.g. Carr and Kemmis 1986). Through out its history, action research lasted the above mentioned up and down. By now, it is increasingly becoming tool for school reform and it gives focus on new engagements in educational change by individual or small group (Reason & Brandbury, 2004:272-275).

2.3 Characteristics of Action Research

Characteristics of action research are detailed by different authors with some differences and more similarities. Some characterize it in terms of advantages like Elliott and other characterize it in terms of procedure and mode like Van Lier. Therefore, the current researcher tried to summarize the features of action research given by Elliott (1991), Allwright (1991), Woods (1986) and Van Lier's (1988) as follow:

According to Elliott (1991; 49-56) action research has the following fundamental characteristics:

- Action research is a collaborative process.
- Action research is dynamic; change is an inherent part of the action research process.
- Action research settles the theory-practice issues as it is perceived by teachers. In action research the theoretical abstraction plays as a supplementary role on the enhancement of practical wisdom rooted in reflective experiences of concrete cases.
- Action research integrates teaching and teacher development, curriculum development and evaluation, and research and philosophical reflection in to unified conceptions of a reflective educational practice.
- Action research breaks out the isolation of teachers' role. It does not encourage teachers as autonomously functioning individuals reflecting in isolation form. It empowers teachers' collaborative work. "For the isolated teachers ignorance is bliss" (p, 15).
- Action research can be used by teachers to investigate a relevant classroom problem.
- Action research involves teacher reflection at each step in the inquiry process.
- Action research can be used to improve practice, solve a problem, institute change or enhance teacher development.

- Action research is naturalistic and often uses participant observation techniques to study a phenomenon.
- Action research often involves solving practical problems and exploring classroom issues.
- Action research expands teachers' professional knowledge in a specific discipline.
- Action research involves teachers engaging in the cyclical process of planning, acting, and reflecting (the action research cycle).
- The basic aim of action research is to improve and/ or change practices rather than to provide knowledge. The production and utilization of knowledge is supported and conditioned by action research. Improvement of a practice consists of the realization of the values which constitute its ends.
- Action research improves practice by developing the practitioners' capacity for analyze and judge on the complex humans situations. It brings together enquiry, enhancement of performance and development of practitioners in their practice. "It informs professional judgment and their by develops practical wisdom" (p, 55).

Allwright (1991; 42) and van Lier (1988; 68) also characterize action research as collaborative, situational, participatory and self-reflective research.

Somekh (2006) the broad and inclusive definition of action research has the following characteristics.

- Action research integrates research and action in the series of flexible cycle involving, holistically rather than separate steps.
- Action research is conducted by a collaborative partnership of participant and researchers.
- Action research involves the development of knowledge and understanding of a unique kind.
- Action research involves a high level of reflexivity and sensitivity to the role of the self in mediating the whole research process.

- Action research is an exploratory engagement with a wide range of existing knowledge drawn from psychology, philosophy, sociology and other fields of social science, in order to test its exploratory power and practical usefulness.
- Action research genders powerful learning for participants through combining research with reflection on practice.
- Action research locates the inquiry in an understanding of broader historical, political and ideological context that shape and constraint human activity at all level and in all aspects.

2.4 Action Research Process

According to Johnson (2002), Allwright (1991), Wallace (1991; 17), Nunan (1993), Carr and Kemmis (1986: 202-5), and Richards and Lockhart (1994: 200-1), conducting action research encompasses the following steps:

- **Identify problem area**

Carr and Kemmis (1986: 202-5), and Johnson (2002) stated teachers often have several questions they wish to investigate; however, it is important to limit the question to one that is meaningful and doable in the confines of their daily work. Careful planning at this first stage will limit false starts and frustrations. At this stage teachers identify a problem. The question should be a higher-order question-not a yes/no type of question, stated in common language, avoiding jargon, concise, meaningful and not already have an answer.

- **Gather Data**

The collection of data according to Johnson (2002) is an important step in deciding what action needs to be taken. Multiple sources of data are used to better understand the scope of happenings in the classroom or school. Organize the data in a way that makes it useful to identify trends and themes.

- **Interpret Data**

Analyze and identify major themes.

- **Act on Evidence**

Using the information from the data collection and review of current literature, design a plan of action that will allow EFL teachers to make a change and to study that change. While the new technique is being implemented, continue to document and collect data on performance.

- **Evaluate Results**

Assess the effects of the intervention to determine if improvement has occurred. If there is improvement, do the data clearly provide the supporting evidence? If no, what changes can be made to the actions to elicit better results?

- **Next Steps**

As a result of the action research project, identify additional questions raised by the data and plan for additional improvements, revisions, and next steps.

2.5 Types of Action Research

Action Research has been divided into three types: technical, practical, and emancipatory or critical (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996a).

Technical Action Research

Technical Action Research, which is based on experience and observation, is positivist and predictive, and tries to control human situations through rules based on empirical laws. The purpose of this research is to discover the laws underlying reality and to improve the effectiveness of educational and managerial practice (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996a). In this type of Action Research the problem is defined in advance, and attempts are then made to solve it through experience. Events are explained in terms of real causes and simultaneous effects. The nature of the collaboration between the researcher and the practitioner is technical and facilitator. Technical Action Research is associated with the natural sciences.

Practical Action Research

The aim of Practical Action Research is to understand teaching practice and solve immediate problems. This type of action research is associated with the historical and hermeneutical sciences, and so presumes that the meaning-making in a given situation is interpretative and deliberative. Besides, it aims to facilitate the practitioners' understanding and professional development (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996a). It also aims at generating understanding, and focuses on human interpretation, interactive communication, deliberation, negotiation and detailed description.

Emancipatory or Critical Action Research

Critical Action Research is also called 'emancipatory', because of its goal to achieve liberation through knowledge gathering (Mills, 2003). The name itself comes from critical theory and the critical sciences (Mills, 2003). The purpose of this type of action research is to make a connection between action research and social mobility.

2.6 Ethical Considerations in Action Research

In conducting action research, obeying by certain ethical tenets is mandatory. Violating one's authority in order to get information is strictly forbidden. A researcher should keep in mind that the power relations found in the classroom and avoid abusing students' right to obtain relevant data. Students should not be asked to involve in activities which do not give them meaning or not of a legitimate curriculum. If students are asked to do extra activities, give them personal information and it should be optional. Students' data ought to be confidential; published or reported discussions of research should use pseudonyms for students and possibly the institution. Also most k-12 schools and many higher education institutions have strict rules about getting permission from students or their families if goes beyond instructional variations. It is important to make plans for the research well in advance, inform participants and other concerned bodies. The researcher should also stick on the plan and the findings. Finally, thanking every one who has participated and helped, and sending copies of one's research findings, if appropriate, are important courtesies (Curry, 2005).

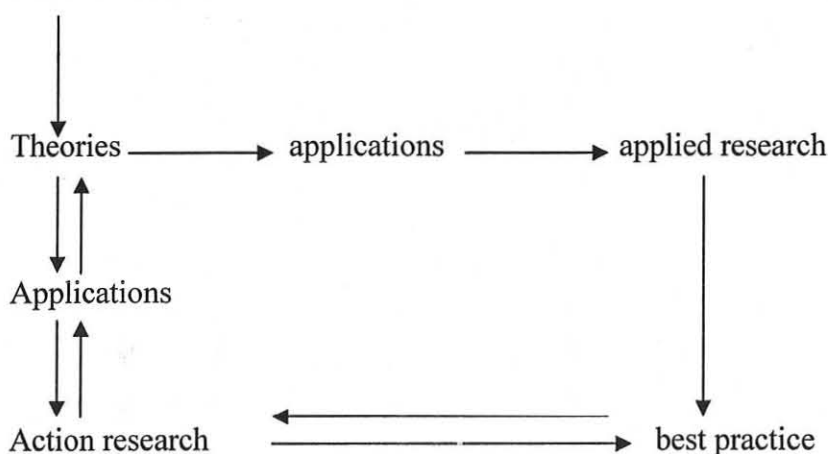
2.7 Action Research and Education

Koul(1997), in Kibre (2009;18), stated that the main reason for the introduction of action research into educational system is the dynamism and complex needs of people for more knowledge, understanding and skills in a rapid change and highly interdependent society which make wise decision about the school programmes more important than ever. Educators and other citizens recognize that they must have greater understanding of education process and greater knowledge of what the school can do, what they should do and how they should do it. Due to this, action research becomes one through which educational values can be realized. Based on Johnson (2002) and Elliott (1991:07), action

research renders a plenty of advantages in the context of education, but the most generalized ones are:

- Filling the gap between theory and practice in the sphere of education. Action research is one solution to get rid of the curtain between what is put in theory and what is actually being practiced in schools/classrooms. Theories and researches related to best practices are used to understand and observe what is going on in a classroom situation. Simultaneously, the data are used to understand and/or inform those theories and researches. This is done through action research. When we see in figure form.

Basic Research



This indicates the two way flow of information in action research but not in the other applied researches.

- Encouraging teacher to have significant effect in change or improving school or classroom practice. Teachers are empowered when they are able to collect their own data to use in making decision in their own everyday practice. They are able to use the variety of methodologies which complement their own particular philosophy and teaching styles.
- Teacher in-service and professional growth through action research can also replace the traditional way of teacher professional development. Using action research as a form of teacher development increases the sense of professionalism in education.

2.8 Action Research and Language Teaching

One of the simple facts of life in the present time is that the English language skills of a good proportion of its citizenry are seen as a vital if a country is to participate actively in the global economy, and to get the access information and knowledge that provide the basis for both social and economic development. Central to this enterprise are English teaching and English language teachers. There is, consequently, increasing demand world wide for competent English language teachers and for more effective approaches to their preparation and professional development. Therefore, how to support the professional development of English teachers with no subject-specific training apart from the formal channel of pursuing a Diploma of Education becomes a question. In the early 1990s, there was a debate about the models of English language teacher development. On this issue, there were two models, namely, content model and process model. Proponents of the content model emphasize the importance of competence defined as the knowledge, skills and understanding to manage classrooms and promote student learning successfully with a view to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for classroom teaching within a short time frame. However, the content model is technocratic and limited in scope because teaching involves more than skills and knowledge in specific domains. On the other hand, process model emphasize the knowledge and skill on the process and the actual happening in the classroom. Teacher education also started facilitating the development of teachers' capacities for situational understandings as a basis for wise judgment and intelligent decisions in complex, ambiguous and dynamic educational situations which is the central intent of process model. Wallace (1999:17) indicated that it has been assumed in the communicative language teaching approach that it is natural and appropriate for teachers to develop their expertise by reflecting on their classroom practice to assure their survival in the communicative era. Van Lier (1988) pointed out that in the previous methodologies where the emphasis was on content, the teaching materials were required to prescribe precisely how the teaching method was to carried out. This way of specification about the language teaching frame work is broadly lacking in communicative language teaching approach. Then teacher has far less external commands available for deciding the language teaching and learning process. Consequently, this forced English language teachers to develop insight into their students

learning and the situation by observing, analyzing, identify potential problem, intervening, modifying their teaching practice and evaluating the results. This directly leads teachers to involve themselves in conducting a certain type of research. (Elliot, 1991, pp. 18-19), according to the proponents of process model it is in the light of the shift from content to process that the concepts of action research and reflective teaching are brought into English language teacher education. It is probably in the nature of a communicative teaching and learning to be less specific about ready made techniques and linguistic content, but this very fact put much more of the burden of choice and procedures on the teacher. These increased responsibilities require knowledge and understanding of classroom processes and of human interaction in general. Classroom research of a strictly descriptive kind is, therefore, of direct interest to the communicatively oriented teachers; it is also the one aspect of second language acquisition research that teacher can most easily directly participates in and influences (Van Lier 1988:73).

2.8.1 Rationale of Action Research in Language Teaching

Today, roles of a teacher are changing rapidly from a traditional perspective to a modern one. Instead of being just a follower of new methodologies, teachers are the source and creator of the theoretical basis of their own implementation techniques, and become researchers within the territories of their own classroom and/or institution. So, teachers are becoming both practitioners and theorists of today's language teaching profession. Nunan (1992) emphasizes the gap between theory, research and practice as until comparatively recently, the focus in much of the writing of foreign language education was at the level of method. Methodological prescriptions were generally argued logico-deductively, and prescriptions for practice were generally devoid of data. However, with the inclusion of the classroom teacher in research, the disparity between theoretical assumptions and real classroom occurrences has been overcome. Van Lier (1988), today more and more institutions are becoming aware of the reasons and aims of conducting teacher-initiated research. The reasons are various. Teachers may want to know more about their learners and what they find motivating and challenging; or teachers might want to learn more about their own teaching, how effective they are, how they look at their students, and how they would look at themselves if they observed their own

teaching. They might also want to observe interest generated by certain topics, or have an idea of the effectiveness of certain activity types. They might want to see if an activity would work better done in groups rather than in pairs, or investigate whether reading is more effective with or without pre-teaching vocabulary (Harmer, 2002). As asserted by Carr and Kemmis (1986) one of the most important reasons for conducting action research is that “it is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants (teacher, or principals, for example)” (p.182). Teachers’ research questions stem from areas they consider problematic and these questions bear the aim of the improvement in teaching.

The experience of constantly incorporating action research into English language teaching program has sharpened EFL teachers, view on their practice which contributed much to foster language learning among learners. This has led to a certain modifications in the over all language teaching strategies (Wallace, 1999:178). He also states that “action research help them break out of the isolation of the teachers role and tap them in to the expertise of the wide language teaching community (pp, 178). As teacher is not an island, action research facilitates by making use of the ideas, insights and finding of colleagues, other teachers’ writers and researchers is fostered.

According to Burns (2005; 62) action research on the part of language teaching has been seen as a way to bridge the gulf between researcher and teacher and to encourage teachers to adopt an investigative stance towards their classroom practices. In a detail manner, among the ways that action research has been oriented towards various purposes of English language teacher education are the following; to address and find solution to particular problems in a specific teaching or learning situation, to underpin and investigate curriculum innovation and understand the process that occur as part of educational change, to provide a vehicle to reduce the gaps between academic research findings and practical classroom applications, to facilitate the professional development of reflective teachers, to acquaint teachers with the research skills and enhance their knowledge of conducting research, and to enhance the development of teachers’ personal practical theories. In addition to this, Hailesslassie (2004; 39) explained that action research help EFL teachers to participate in policy formulation and curriculum development; it enables them faster conducive learning environment; it promote teaching

to the status of profession; and it cultivates knowledge and skill to fit with the need of learners.

In a similar way, Nunan (1993) said that action research involves the careful monitoring of planned change in practice. A decision is made on whether that particular action may yield improvements or provide information as to the nature of the language teaching situation. Elliott (1991:23) also pointed out that teachers undertake action research into a practical problem and on these bases he/she changes or improves some aspects of his/her language teaching style. The empowerment of understanding proceeds the decision to change teaching strategies, reflective intimation action and this help school teacher to change or improve his/her teaching methods.

2.8.2 EFL Teachers' Knowledge in Action Research

Knowledge is the data, information and models or theories that EFL teachers use to work with this information and data. To take an action requires a broad base of knowledge on many subjects. Subject matter knowledge by itself, however, is not enough to successfully initiate and maintain an action. Knowing how to apply that knowledge is of equal importance (Aune, 2008).

In order for the practitioners to change their own practices, they need to have knowledge that leads them to take action and solve problems or improve practices which is closely related to their knowledge. According to Schon (1993), cited in Tadesse (2007), knowledge in action is inherent in the action and is the essential part of epistemology of all professional practice. Therefore, teachers need to broaden the existing epistemological horizon to include different forms of knowledge associated with various human concerns. As said by Park (2001:86), there are different types of knowledge that human being can possess, but the one which is related with action research is reflective knowledge. Reflective knowledge is one type of knowledge which derives from the critical theoretical tradition which argues that meaningful human knowledge must not merely understand the world but also change it.

Concerted engagement in change producing activities require conscious and continuous reflection on the part of the actors involved, this is why this form of knowledge is chosen to be called reflective (Park, 2001:56). Reflective knowledge involves actors themselves critically in analyzing and evaluating questions or morality and values relating to their

life conditions and the proper actions to take. Based on Park's (2001:96) idea, reflective knowledge confirms the dignity of human beings as free and autonomous agents who can act reflectively and responsibly on their own behalf in the context of their interdependent relationships.

Crookes (1993) explained that EFL teachers' knowledge and authority in action research determines teachers' efforts in conducting action research in two ways; it can make them feel their own practices are a worthy source of research data, worth studying, sharing with others and improving practices, and it can help them read research more critically, not simply seeking advice from experts but reading and reflecting on what they read in the light of their experience and understanding of classrooms.

Moreover, Weirism (1986) in Abrham (2004) has also remarked that it is important for educational professionals to be knowledgeable and skillful about action research. Accordingly, before attempting to do or to practice action research, some knowledge and skills must be acquired.

Further more, Cohen and Manion (1950), in Van Lier (1988) have remarked that for teachers in general and EFL teachers in particular to develop positive attitude towards action research and ultimately to involve in research, they need to understand the very nature of research and appreciate its attribute. Improvement of practices through research in the context of classroom achieved only if teachers have knowledge and positive attitude. Basic skills and knowledge are needed along with a positive mind-set or attitude in order to effectively implement a process. Having knowledge in problem identification, research design and methods of data gathering and analysis, even of statistical treatment, enable an action researcher to tackle primary research literature as well as to evaluate secondary sources critically. But a strong justification for language teachers to have a good grounding in appropriate research methods is that many candidates see research knowledge and skills as an extension of their professional profile. They thought that research knowledge and skill may only be important for those aiming at university posts, at some contract expatriate posts, e.g. overseas development posts, usually involving programme evaluation. Although the motivation for teacher research and action research may be strong, the opportunity in many EFL context is low, and the benefits in terms of encouragement or acceptance by local authorities likewise (McDonough; 1997).

As to Wallace (1999:17), “some teachers come a long way round to state the role of action research. But I suspect that for many people , however ,the role of action research as an activity for practicing teachers is by no means obvious(p;17)”. This is resulted from teachers’ minimal understanding about action research. Most EFL teachers have lack of knowledge that gained from experience as well as from training. Therefore, many teachers fear that this type of work would require too much additional time that they do not have. But this fear can be minimized by examining more closely exactly what action research is and how can it be part of one’s daily routine as a language teacher (Hall, 2005).

Similar to this, in his project he indicated that:

According to a questionnaire and interviews administered before we conduct the project, most of the teachers were unfamiliar with the concept of action research. Only one teacher indicated that he had some know-how and tried to conduct action research which had been supervised by a senior teacher at the school. But once they have been introduced to the main steps and concept of action research, they started to identify their own research issues and implement the research in their schools.

This indicates that teachers have not got the required training to conduct action research in their classroom and school. Where action research is very new and there are few published studies in the literature that show how it can be used in professional development, teachers may not be criticized for their off using action research. Atay (2000) put in his journal that “as can be seen, in general teachers’ statements revealed that their awareness of the usefulness of action research as well as their fear and lack of knowledge of the action research process. Even some teachers felt ‘lost’ at different stages of the action research process: for them, data analysis is the most troublesome area...they cannot sort the data. They need more guidance” and he also added that “for most EFL teachers the role of teacher as action researcher is ‘strange’ as they have thought a researcher would do more ‘complex’ and ‘sophisticated’ research”. This is resulted from lack of knowledge concerning what action research and how its process is. So EFL teachers should acquire the basic knowledge and skills of action research and how to conduct action research with the intention of using it as a tool for professional development and improving practice.

2.8.3 EFL Teachers' Involvement in Action Research

In recent years, the notion of reflective language teaching in teachers' education has come to prominence. It is believed that trainee teachers should be encouraged to examine the aims and values of various traditions and methods, and reflect on their own language teaching in the light of the experiences and theoretical knowledge they have accumulated through professional reading and the teachers' educational programmes (Thorne and Qiang, 1996; 254).

Nunan (1999) said

...here is the point where teachers are obligated to create a much closer relationship between language teaching and conducting action research, between teachers and researcher, and teachers themselves required to be involved in the research process. As they are required reflectively to transfer their practice in order to adjust an appropriate methodology and context for conducting an appropriate communicative language teaching and learning process.

Similarly, the uniqueness of each classroom setting implies that any proposal-even at school level-needs to be tested, verified and adapted by each teacher in his/her own language classroom. The ideal is that the curricular specification should feed a teacher's proposal research and development programmes through which he/she is increasing his/her own understanding of his/her own work and hence bettering his teaching ...it is not enough that teachers' should be studied; they need to study it themselves (Burns,1999;170). This indicates that the necessity of action research in the sphere of English language classroom, but as to them its practicability is the reverse.

Based on Johnston (1994:39), many EFL teachers in a range of situations suggested that they found involvement in action research both professionally and personally rewarding and contributing to significant change to their practice and their understanding of that practice. Of course there have been important developments over the past two decades that teachers integrate research into their classroom practices. Teachers have contributed as practitioners, researchers and writers to some classic action research projects like, the 'humanities curriculum project' (see MacDonald, 1973), the 'girls into science and technology (GIST) project (Kelly et al, 1984 cited in Hanock,1997;85) and so on. Although these are some of the significant and desirable developments, some writers made clear that the great majority of classroom teachers remain uninvolved.

By being in the same boat with Johnston, Hanock (1997; 86), in Tadesse (2007), stated that they (English language teachers) shy away from seeing themselves as researchers and they are reluctant to write about their teaching practices. Stenhouse (1975; 142) cited in Hanock (1997)), in Tadesse (2007), on his part certainly anticipated the difficulty “I concede that it will a generation of work ...if the majority of teachers rather than only the enthusiastic few- are to possess this field of research”.

Van Lier (1988) also said that even though action research has come to the natural setting in the sphere of social sciences starting from the year 1940s, it has not been given much consideration as a distinct research type in the context of language classroom. Crooke's (1993) view on the status of action research in the language teaching seems agree with the Van Lier's view and he said that although 'action research' has a long history, it is a term which has only quite recently become known in the English language classroom. No so differ from this, Rainey (2000) reported, in practice, however, that in an international survey, the majority of EFL secondary school teachers had never heard of action research and, of those that had, few were actually doing it or had ever done it. Of those few teachers that were doing it or had done it, most claimed that they wrote up their research but no concrete evidence of the dissemination of their research reports was forthcoming and, as Rainey, “without access to the teachers' research, it is virtually impossible for the knowledge and expertise that successful teachers have developed to foster educational reform” (2000: 83).

To conclude by Johnston's (1994; 43) view; there is a dissonance between action research and teaching. Teachers' reluctance to take action research may arise because action research even though appearing on the surface to be a natural part of what is considered to be good teaching, actually does not fit with the process that reflective, and inquiry teachers use.

2.8.4 Attitude of EFL Teachers towards Action Research

Creswell (1994) revealed that by very nature positive attitude and interest is a deriving force to conduct research. If not absolutely, this is with great probable. Although technical know-how is an important part of teachers' research, one must not lose sight of the fact that the development in teachers of appropriate attitudes to and understandings of

research are even more fundamental; that is, even where teachers possess the technical know-how required to do research, they may still be deterred from doing so by, for example, misconceptions about its purposes, or restrictive evaluations of their own authority and knowledge in the classroom (Borg, 2003). Such sentiments are reflected in the comments made about research in a study by Crookes & Arakaki: "Many participants articulated a strong, stereotypical image of researchers as living in an ivory tower, and tended to feel that only working teachers could have credible opinions about good teaching" (1999: 16, cited in Borg, 2003).

Sometimes people criticize action research as idle self-contemplation. This is not so. People do action research as a way of helping them understand how they can influence social change. This commitment is contained in Marx's idea that it is not enough only to understand the world; the intent is to change it for the better (McNiff, 2010).

Teachers have less attention to connect teaching and action research. They say conducting action research is something extra that keen teachers can do which goes beyond their usual teaching responsibilities. Instead, action research is an integral part of their responsibilities as professionals dedicated to develop their teaching and themselves (Watson Todd, 2010).

In language teaching, as well as in the broader educational community, a strong distinction has been made between academic research and classroom practice. Academic research conventions created separation among theory, research and practice with the result many teachers regard research, at best with suspicion and at worst with contempt, as the province of academic researchers who know little and understand little about the day to day business of life in the language classroom. Even when teachers are interested in research and research findings, they believe that they have not knowledge and skill to do (Burns, 1999; 259).

Howard and Sharp (1983:6) cited in Bell (1993) in Cherie (2003) tried to explain the existing misconception about the concept of 'research' among EFL teachers who think that research is something which can be undertaken only by naturally gifted people. Bell stated in this way:

Most people associate the word research with activities which are substantially removed from day-to-day life and which are pursued by outstanding persons with unusual level of commitment. There is of course a good deal of truth in this view point, we would argue that the pursuit is no restricted to this type of people and indeed can prove to be a stimulating and satisfying experience for many people with a training and enquiring mind.

To conclude, action research is sometime seen as having an uncertain status as research methodology, and it's sometime subjected to criticism about its validity, reliability and generalizability, so that its potential benefits as a research approach and its contributions to professional developments are not yet clear for language teachers. As a result, their interest in the activity is low (Burns, 2005).

2.8.5 Tendency of EFL teachers in Using Action Research Results to Improve Classroom Practices

Simply conducting action research can not facilitate the reduction of the gap between research and practice. Sharing the results-either formally or informally and using them to improve and solve problem in the real activity help to bridge the division between research and application. Sharing the results of action research does not only help to narrow the gap between theory/research and practice, but it also provides the teachers-researcher with the opportunity to gain additional insight into the topic under the investigation as well as into the research process itself. The act of sharing, communicating and disseminating the result of action research allow other educators to see this as well (Mertler, 2003). Basically, research including action research is not an activity performed just to keep oneself busy or to do some mental exercises, rather it is done for benefit. For that reason, it should be disseminated, shared and utilized by the concerned bodies. King (1998) cited in Kiflom (2009) stated that dissemination can be considered as the process by which the research findings reach different audience. He further explained that any researcher has to think about his/her research results dissemination and utilization process at least when they attempt to begin research activities. Hall (2005) also said that of the primary importance is that action research is making contributions to language teaching and learning inquiry. Teachers share their findings and continue to use the results to improve classroom practices and co-construct new knowledge. Teachers engage in classroom research become leaders in their school. Often their work is shared with in the school districts and may go on to present their findings at local, state and in some cases, national conference settings. These are presented as workshops or teacher poster sessions.

In the same way, action research is an applied scholarly paradigm resulting in action for improvement in teaching and learning practices and techniques. In action research, there is revision, researchers' collaboration, open communication, critical analysis, reflection, and relating classroom practices with theory. Here, action research needs documentation of results, improvements, changes, process and resultant learning (Young, 2008).

An action research report, therefore, should not be read as if unsuccessfully targeted for an academic journal. Its contents should be disseminated (as research is not research unless communicated). A range of alternatives to the academic journal article exist (e.g. conference presentation, teachers centre poster), most of which are probably more effective in disseminating the information they contained in such a report. Investigations of the utilization of research findings make it clear that findings only presented in academic journal stands little chance of being utilized. Other means of information dissemination must be adopted, in which the personal element is involved, either in dissemination alone or through institutionalizing action research so as to change school staffs into communities of action researchers (Crookes, 1993).

Organize teachers together and make them share findings is a key element in the inquiry/research process as they provide practitioners with opportunities to learn from one another through sharing knowledge, insights, perspectives, and skills. By encouraging practitioners to come together to rigorously analyze data and critique research methodology and findings in a constructive manner, practitioners build their self-confidence and are better able to share their findings with a broader audience (Sherman and Green, 1997).

2.8.6 Action Research and EFL Teachers' Professional Development

It is possible to employ action research as a means of professional development for English teacher with the support of an English teacher education professional.

Although the results of case studies are not meant for generalization, the three teachers who participated in my studies have benefited from the action research in the following respects: the teachers enhanced knowledge in English Language Teaching, boost in confidence and sense of satisfaction, improved teaching strategies and techniques, and broadened their mind (Poon, 2008).

Reflective teachers are most of the time better informed teachers about their teaching. Thus, they are able to evaluate their stage of professional development and the required

change in their practice to equip with their level of profession. This can be done when EFL teachers involve in activities that empower them and create a sense of responsibility to try different options and mirror their effects on their teaching. One strategy for this is involving in action research and considering action research as a continuing and a routine activity of teaching. By and large, when language teachers conduct action research to investigate how classroom practices are being run, they are in a best position to discover whether crack is occurred between what they are teaching and what their students are learning or not (Richards and Lockhart's (1996). As their view, action research is a measurement of professional growth. "Reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching. It involves examining teaching experiences as a basis for evaluation, decision making, and change" (Bartlett, 1990; Wallace, 1991) cited in Richards and Lock hart, 1996).

Wallace (1999) agrees with the Richards and Lockhart's idea, and said that it is assumed that most language teachers wish to develop themselves professionally on a continuing basis. They have access to a wide variety of methods of doing. One method is by reflecting on interesting and/or problematic areas in a structural way. Teachers shall be looking at various ways of structuring this process of reflection through the systematic collection and analysis of data .This is termed as action research. Action research is different from other more conventional and traditional types of researches in that it is very focused on individual or small group professional practice and is not so concerned with making a broad statement. But the main function of action research is to facilitate the reflective cycle and in this way provide an effective method for improving professional developments. Hopkins (2001; 42), as cited in Cherie (2003), concluded that "action research combines a substantive act with a research procedure; it is action disciplined enquiry and a personal attempt at understanding while engaging in process of improvement and reform." Then the present researcher believed that teachers should be engaged in action research in order to develop their profession and ground their teaching on justifiable argument.

Similarly, McNiff (2002) said that doing action research helps EFL teachers to grow professionally, to show how EFL teachers are extending their own professional knowledge. It does this in many ways, including the following:

- Doing their action research helps EFL teachers to examine their own practice and see whether it lives up to their own expectations of themselves in their work.
- By showing other people what EFL teachers are doing, EFL teachers can establish a systematic evaluation procedure. If EFL teachers are a manager, they are showing how they are supporting the learning of those in their organization, and EFL teachers can say why they think this is happening. They can also produce clear evidence to show progress
- EFL teachers can identify the criteria, or standards that they themselves and others are using to judge the quality of what EFL teachers are doing. They identify how they understand their professionalism, in negotiation with others, and they show how they are trying to live in this way.

2.8.7 Factors Hindering EFL Teachers in Conducting Action Research

In spite of increased prominence within EFL given to concepts such as action research in recent years, teachers in the field do not engage in any significant manner with action research. For many teachers, action research is a foreign concept, and for many others, any initial enthusiasm they have for action research is quickly undermined. Understanding some of the factors behind this situation can provide direction for teacher educators wanting to do something. So, here are some of the factors which are itemized by Johnson (2002), Wallace(1999), Nunan(1989), Nunan (1992), Burns(1999), McNiff(1993), Van Lier (1988), Crookes (1993), Curry(2005) and Elliott(1991;79).These are:

- **Lack of knowledge**

Teachers may also feel they lack the technical knowledge of action research required for them to carry out worthwhile project. For example, they may lack expertise in research design or in data analysis. They are often also untrained in writing for publication. Two points emerge here from this brief discussion of the ten factors above. One is that there are often very concrete reasons for teachers' lack of engagement with action research, and any discussion of the role of action research in teachers' professional lives cannot ignore these. Second, these reasons can provide direction for research education

initiatives which are grounded in the real psychological, emotional, and contextual challenges teachers face vis-à-vis research. This is the issue.

- **Inaccessibility**

Researchers often write for fellow researchers. Thus much published research is made available in a form which is not accessible to teachers, conceptually, linguistically, and even physically. Teachers can thus either not get hold of it, or when they do, have to struggle through conceptually-dense and linguistically-complex material obviously not written with them in mind. This inevitably discourages teachers from reading research (Nunan, 1992).

- **Lack of local relevance**

According to Crookes (1993), there is some evidence to suggest that teachers are most convinced to adopt new practices by local knowledge - understandings of teaching emerging from their own or their colleagues' experience. Such knowledge has a number of characteristics. It is specific, contextualized, observable and testable. This kind of knowledge contrasts with the knowledge often generated and presented by researchers, which, in its attempt to be generalizable, lacks specificity and does not enable teachers to relate it to their own contexts. (Nunan, 1992) seems agree with the Crooke's by saying teachers are therefore less likely to be convinced that research has relevance to their work, and less inclined to read it.

- **Lack of Confidence(Self-image)**

Another factor which hinders teachers' involvement in action research is the perception on their part that their knowledge of classrooms is neither valuable nor of interest to other professionals. Conditioned by their educational and professional backgrounds, teachers thus see themselves primarily as knowledge implementers, putting into practice ideas created by others. Knowledge generation, on the other hand, is seen by teachers to be the responsibility of researchers and policy makers (Nunan, 1990 and Crookes, 1993).

- **Lack of credibility.**

The lack of local relevance, narrative, and ownership mentioned above can contribute to a general lack of credibility which research often has in teachers' eyes. This is enhanced when the research makes recommendations for practice which teachers may feel are being made by researchers whose own understandings of the practical demands of

classrooms are very limited. Such sentiments are reflected in the comments made about research in a study by Crookes: "Many participants articulated a strong, stereotypical image of researchers as living in an ivory tower, and tended to feel that only working teachers could have credible opinions about good teaching" (1999: 16).

- **Pressure**

A common factor which limits teachers' ability to engage with action research is the pressure they are under to cope with the daily demands of their jobs. For many teachers, heavy workloads simply mean that there is no time (or incentive) for reading or doing action research. Those who do find such time often do so at the expense of their social and family lives. Another is Crookes study illustrates this view: "I don't have time to look at that stuff EFL teachers know? It's a waste of time. A lot of research doesn't help EFL teachers Because they don't relate to what EFL teacher's doing" (1999: 17).

Pressure may also come from the broader educational systems in which teachers work; these may not be favorably disposed to innovative thinking or to practices, such as teacher research, which diverge from the established norms. In such contexts, teachers who are interested in research may be treated with suspicion and isolated.

- **Time and workload**

Connon (1945:87) cited in Seyoum (1998:9) in Abraham (2004:41) expressed the indispensability of time for research activity as follow:

An investigator may be given a place to live in, a perfect laboratory to work in, he may be surrounded by the conveniences money can provide; but if his time is taken from him, he will remain sterile. On the other hand, as the history of science abundantly shows an investigator may be poverty stricken, eh may be ill clothes, he may live in a garret and have only meager appliances for his use; but given time he can be productive.

Over burdened teachers will not have enough time to afford to research work? Research is not cursory work; rather it is a careful and patience inquiry work. As Seyoum (1998:13) shortage of time is another handicap that hampers research activities in schools.

- **Lack of recognition(Criticism)**

As Burns (1999), Van Lier (1988), and Crookes (1993), the dominant notion of action research in EFL discourages teacher research by claiming that such work does not meet its criteria for acceptability – e.g. validity, objectivity, and methodological rigor.

Teachers' efforts to contribute to an understanding of EFL are thus undervalued, very often by those who are in a position to control knowledge dissemination (e.g. journal editors). The outcome is an increased feeling by teachers that entry into the world of research is not possible on their terms but rather only in the terms of what is very often an alien discourse. While some teachers persist, many just give up.

- **Implied inadequacy and lack of interest**

According to Nunan (1990), competent teachers may not feel the need to do research. As long as the teaching and learning process is proceeding smoothly and the teacher, students, the school, and parents are happy, research, which often carries with it the implication that there is a problem that needs fixing, is not felt to be necessary. The suggestion that teachers engage in research, by implying they are inadequate in some way, can in fact be construed as a threat to their competence. When such attitudes prevail, action research is seen as an undesirable activity to engage in. In addition, any process of inquiry should not be imposed from the external body. This idea is supported by Jones in Seyoum (1998:7) in Tadesse (2007:41) success will be achieved when the intention comes from the individual researcher himself or herself.

2.9 The Status of Action Research in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the need to conduct research in classroom and school situations is clearly stipulated in the Education and Training Policy and the Education Sector strategy document in 1994 (Ashenafi,2007). With reference to research and development, the document states that research into curriculum techniques shall be encouraged and assisted. It expresses the need to integrate and co-ordinate the teaching-learning process with research and facilitates the participation of teachers and researchers in getting the necessary experience.

By no means, this is clear that the intent of educational policy is to alleviate educational problems and assures quality education over all. This starts from tackling classroom problems especially in language classrooms. This entails EFL teachers are encouraged to conduct research.

Generally speaking, it is acknowledged that action research, if EFL teachers are able to conduct it, can help them a lot. Unfortunately, however, the available research works in the area (Seyoum, 1998; Firdissa, 2007; Abraham, 2004; Yibeltal, 2006; Ashenafi, 2007;

Cherie, 2003; Mekuriaw, 2007; Tadesse, 2007 and Wondu, 2006) indicated that the status of research in classroom is marginal.

From the above mentioned studies, Aster, 2004; Cherie, 2003; Yibeltal, 2006; Wondu, 2006; Mekuriaw, 2007, Ashenafi, 2007 and Tadesse, 2007 are those who conducted their research that dealt with action research. From those Cherie, 2003; Wondu, 2006 and Mekuriaw, 2007 and Firdissia, 2007(Journal Article) are done on action research in relation to language teaching and EFL teachers.

Yibeltal (2006) has found out that the status of action research activities was low due to teachers' lack of motivation that resulted from interruption of promotion in the career structure, teachers' lack of interest and negative attitudes; teachers' lack of commitments, in adequate facilities; lack of research skills and knowledge's and lack of financial support, and others.

Cherie (2003) conducted a research on the English language teachers' involvement in action research in Kotebe, Nazereth and Hawassa colleges of teacher education and he found the following results: Teachers' involvement in action research was insignificant; teachers had positive attitude towards conducting action research in English classroom; lack of research skills and undermining the role of research as the most serious problems for teachers to conduct action research; and teachers emphasized relevant research and adequate research courses to be given to them to enhance their research skills.

Wondu (2006) conducted a research on Addis Ababa secondary school English teachers involvement in action research and his findings are as following: teachers' involvement in action research was very limited; majority of the teachers had not time and research skill to conduct action research; majority of the teachers had not the interest to conduct action research in the future; majority of the teachers did not take courses on action research and were not given training as well; teachers working environment were not conducive to involve in action research; and teachers who conducted action research did presentations of their research findings.

Aster (2004) also conducted a research to explore factors that affect teachers to carry out action research at upper primary schools in Sidama zone and she come up with the following results: teachers had very little conscious effort to carry out action research; teachers level of research competence was low; the availability of resources like books,

journals, incentives and finance was limited; research courses which teachers had taken were not helpful to teachers to equip them with research skills; and teachers had shortage of time to conduct action research.

Similarly Mekuriaw (2007) conducted a research on an assessment of the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research in the teachers teaching at colleges of teacher education in Amhara region and he arrived at the following results: majority of the teachers took courses related to research in different educational programs and the courses they took were relevant in equipping them with research skills; majority of the teachers had interest in conducting action research; the administrative of each colleges was supportive and positive to research activities; teachers present their findings in different sittings to different audiences. Internal and external factors motivate them to do so; shortage of time, work load and lack of adequate action research skills were sever problems hampering teachers from conducting action research; the supportive and open nature of college administration to research activities, the training they got from higher diploma the research and publisher office, the presentation, their level of qualification and their teaching experience were among the motivating factors to conduct action research; none of the teachers were involved in action research deliberately; and all the teachers were found to have an intention to conduct action research in the future.

In the above, the researchers conducted their research on the involvement of EFL teachers in action research. Cherie and Mekuriaw conducted their research on colleges. Whereas Wonda in Addis Ababa secondary schools and Aster in Sidama upper primary school. As a result, the current research differs from the above researches in three things. First, they have not studied the knowledge of action research among English language teachers and their participation in different in-service trainings. Second, they have not assessed the practice of EFL teachers' in using action research findings to improve classroom language practices and sharing the findings among the teachers of the same school and the nearby schools, and create other problem areas. This is because from the very beginning of the essence of action research, it is cyclical. Third, the current research was conducted on in untouched places as far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned as difference in place is one factor for differing results of similar researches. By taking these points into account, the current research was conducted on this area.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design and methodology which was employed in the study. This includes the research design, study area, target population, instruments of data collection, pilot testing of questionnaires and interviews, validity and reliability of results and data analysis procedure.

3.1 Research design

The principal aim of this study was to investigate the knowledge and practice of action research among EFL teachers in five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. It was also the purpose of this study to see the factors that hinder EFL teachers in carrying out action research in classroom, the attitude of EFL teachers towards action research and their level of using and disseminating the action research findings to improve English language teaching learning process. To do so, descriptive study method was found fitted. This method was fitted for the very reason that it deals with 'what is' i.e. it describes and interprets what exists at present. Therefore, the purpose of using this descriptive study was to get information with regard to the present phenomena of action research-its status and trends. In addition, this method of study was employed because the researcher concerns with conditions that exist, practices that prevail, processes that are going on, influences that are being felt and trends those are developing in action research pertaining to the EFL teachers. What's more, Trochim and Donnelly (2007) pointed out that descriptive studies are designed primarily to describe what is going on or exist in relation to action research and its practicability in the above mentioned high schools. Public opinion polls that seek only to describe the proportion of people who hold various opinions are primarily descriptive in nature. For example, if you want to know what percent choose something, you are simply interested in describing something. Thus, here descriptive study method was employed. In case of approach, it is mixed research approach. As Creswell (2009), the researcher used mixed approach, in which he used both quantitative and qualitative approach because of wanting of both generalization and detailed view of the meaning of phenomenon or concept for individuals.

3.2 Setting

3.2.1 School

This study was conducted in five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. These schools were Weri Secondary School, Weri Preparatory School, Embasneyti Secondary and Preparatory School, Maiknetal Secondary School and Tadelech Hailu Secondary School. These high schools were chosen for many reasons but the two core reasons were: Firstly, they are close to the home land of the researcher and the researcher believed that respondents would be easily accessible and cooperative in the study, and second, these areas were not researched hitherto to the extent that the researcher's knowledge was concerned. Then the respondents were not tired of filling questionnaire.

3.3 Target Population

3.3.1 EFL Teachers

This study was conducted on English language teachers of the aforesaid schools as the focus of the study was to investigate action research pertaining to EFL teachers vis-à-vis knowledge, practice, attitude, etc, then it concerned for action research and EFL teachers. EFL teachers are the doer or the practitioners, whereas, action research is what is to be done by these doers or practitioners. Therefore, they were selected purposively because they were assumed to be available for the required data. In these schools, there were thirty English language teachers, and then four of them were included in the pilot study. The rest twenty six English teachers were intended to be included in the main study. But one of the EFL teachers was not voluntary. In view of that, twenty five respondents were included in the main study.

Table1, Respondents' Characteristic

no	Item	Alternatives	Frequency	%
1	age	20-29 yrs	14	56
		30-39 yrs	9	36
		≥ 40 yrs	2	8
		Total	25	100
2	Gender	Male	22	88
		Female	3	12
		Total	25	100
3	School	Maiknetal Secondary School	4	
		Weri Secondary School	7	
		Weri Preparatory school	4	
		Nebelet Secondary School	7	
		Tadelach Hailu Secondary School	3	
		Total	25	100

3.3.2 School Directors

In these high schools, there were five directors. All of them were included in the main study. The reason why school principals were included in the main study was that they have the responsibility to run the school programmes. Therefore, they have information about the general over view of the work of the teachers in the school. To explore the current status of action research in accordance with the EFL teachers, it was found necessary to get ideas from the principals of the schools.

3.4 Instruments of Data Gathering

The selection and using of an appropriate data gathering tool in a given research relies on various factors like the nature of the research problem, the nature of the respondents of the study and the availability of resources (Burton, 2000 & Hird, 2003 as cited in Mokuriaw, 2007). Here, the relevant data for the study were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and document analysis as they are detailed below.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

The main data-collection tool for this study was questionnaire which contains both close ended and open ended questions. Questionnaires are a good and efficient way of collecting information as they provide many advantages to researchers, some of which are: efficient use of time, relatively cheap, anonymity, high possibility return rate, and standardization. Researchers use questionnaires to gather information by way of different question types. Such as, close ended, open ended, list, category, rank, scale, quantity and grid depend on the type of problem under the study (Bell, 1997). In order to get accurate information from respondents, researchers should aim to use clear and comprehensible questions.

3.4.1.1 Questionnaire for EFL Teachers

Here, questionnaires were designed and administered to EFL teachers of the five high schools. The English language teachers' questionnaires were divided into six parts (see appendix A). The first part is about teachers' profile of background. The second part includes source of action research knowledge for EFL teachers, action research knowledge among EFL teachers, EFL teachers' knowledge in the benefits of action

research and practical knowledge of EFL teachers in action research. The third part incorporates the EFL teachers' practical involvement in action research and the results of their involvement in it. The fourth part contains the problems that hinder teachers' involvement in action research. The fifth part includes the EFL teachers' attitude towards action research. The last but not the least part is the habit of EFL teachers in using and sharing action research findings.

3.4.1.2 Questionnaire for School Directors

Similar to the EFL teachers, questionnaire was developed and administered to the principals of the five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. This questionnaire was administered to the school principals for the sake of gathering data related to the EFL teachers' knowledge in action research, their involvement in action research, their attitude towards action research, and the school principals and school support for EFL teachers to conduct action research.

3.4.2 Interview

The second data collection tool used in this study was the semi-structured interview. Here, the researcher prepared certain list of questions and later tried to probe further questions by using the respondents' idea as a starting point meanwhile the interview was on. This type of interview was used because the researcher aimed respondents to elicit self-reports of their knowledge, practice, attitudes and beliefs in action research. Interview is one of the commonest and most flexible data-collection tools used in research. Through interviews, researchers can gather information in a face-to-face situation. There are three kinds of interviews which can be used in research: the structured or standardized interview, the semi-structured interview, and the unstructured interview.

3.4.3 Document Analysis

Action research documents which had been done by EFL teachers of these schools were reviewed and evaluated. This was done in order to look at the work of the EFL teachers with regard to action research in their school and English language classes. This helped the researcher see the EFL teachers' problem selection, the availability of their work to their English classes, the procedure or steps they have used when they conduct action

research (i.e. planning, data collection, data analysis, description and reporting the results), the knowledge they have improved by conducting the action research.

3.5 Piloting

Pilot study was conducted to test the interviews and questionnaires to see the validity and reliability of the instruments. First, the developed tools were submitted to the advisor and based on the comments got from advisor, tools were corrected. Peer comments were also made from the colleagues. Later the pilot study was conducted on four EFL teachers.

This was done by distributing the questionnaires on four teachers from the same schools where the main study was conducted, and interviewing them as well. After the pilot studies had been conducted, the researcher asked questions to check the workability of the instruments. These questions were: were the questions clear and easy to answer? Did you answer all the questions? Did you get any of the questions embarrassing, irritating, patronizing and irrelevant? How long did you take to complete, especially for questionnaires? And the researcher asked the respondents for any comments and suggestions that help to make his questionnaires and interviews more effective. After that, some questions were modified and some were also totally changed. Lastly, the modified tools were administered to 25 EFL teachers and 5 school principals.

3.6 Procedure of Data Analysis

The raw data obtained from the questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were collected, tallied, edited and coded. Then, by using concurrent mixed model, the analysis part was made. Here, in concurrent mixed model, conduct survey at one level to gather quantitative results about the EFL teachers pertaining to action research. Therefore, by using frequency, percentage and ranking, the quantitative data were analysis. However, percentage was the main statistical tool of analysis for this study. At the same time, collecting qualitative data through interview, open ended questionnaires and action research document review to explore the phenomenon in detail from the specific English teacher individuals in the school was the other pillar. Data drawn from open-ended questions and interviews were first presented as reported by the respondents and transcribed into separate files by the researcher and then analyzed qualitatively through summary and discussion (Creswell, 2009). This model was chosen because it combines

information gathered through both the qualitative and quantitative data collection method into a matrix. This provides the analysis of the combined quantitative and qualitative data. Hence, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were used and finally, based on the data analysis, major findings, conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This part of the paper deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion (interpretation) of data gathered from target population in five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State to find answer for the basic research questions.

As indicated in chapter one, the principal aim of this study was to investigate the EFL teachers' knowledge in action research and level of putting into practice the action research knowledge they have in five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. To achieve this purpose, the researcher formulated the following basic research questions. These are:

- A. do English language teachers of those high schools have knowledge pertaining to undertake action research in English language classroom?
- B. is action research practical among the EFL teachers in classroom?
- C. what is the attitude of EFL teachers towards doing action research?

Thus, to get these basic questions answered, data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and document analysis from EFL teachers and school principals of the five high schools. In this chapter, then, the close ended question were analyzed through frequency and percentage, whereas, the open-ended questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were analyzed qualitatively. At first, the data which were related to English teachers' background profiles were analyzed. Second, data which were related to English language teachers' sources of action research knowledge and action research knowledge among EFL teachers were analyzed. Thirdly, data about the EFL teachers' involvement in action research and the results of their involvement in it were analyzed. Forth, data concerning the problems that hinder teachers' involvement in action research were analyzed. Fifth, data about the EFL teachers' attitude towards action research and lastly data about the habit of EFL teachers in using and sharing action research findings to improve classroom practices were analyzed. During the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, the researcher read the transcriptions a number of times and describes them qualitatively. At this stage the related data to certain point but gathered through different instruments like questionnaire and interview were analyzed consecutively. This helped

the researcher to strengthen his findings. The data gathered from directors and documents were analyzed after the data gathered from EFL teachers analyzed. After the data analysis had been finished, major findings, conclusions and recommendation were drawn.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Data Gathered from EFL

Teachers

4.1.1 EFL Teachers Background

Table 2, EFL Teachers Background

No.	Item	Responses		
		Alternatives	Frequency	%
4	How many years English teaching experience do you have?	0-3yrs	11	44
		4-15 yrs	13	52
		16-25 yrs	1	4
		≥ 26 yrs	-	-
		Total		
5	How many years have you been teaching English at this school?	0-3 yrs	18	72
		4-15 yrs	7	28
		16-25 yrs	-	-
		≥ 26 yrs	-	-
		Total	25	100
6	Do you have an interest to continue teaching English?	Yes	25	100
		No	-	-
		Total	25	100

Regarding the teachers' career service, 52% and 44% of the participants had 4-15 and 0-3 years individual teaching experience respectively. Moreover, 72% and 28% of the participants had been teaching at their present school for between 0-3 and 4-15 years respectively. They were also asked if they had interest to continue as an English teacher and all of them (100%) said that they had interest to continue an English teacher.

These results revealed that the teachers involved in the study were not generally experienced enough and they had not been teaching at the present school for an extended period of time. However, they had interest to go on as an English teacher. The analysis of teachers' teaching experience was done because service year of teachers has influence on the teachers' doing action research. This could be in terms while teachers have adequate teaching experience; they perceive a wide range of problems and seek solution.

e respondents
ing responses

ise	cy	%
		100
		-
		100
		40
		60
		100
		100
		-
		100
		16
		84
		100

had taken any
taken courses
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s preliminary
erent sources.
nts had taken

action research and other related courses, most of them had not got the opportunity to participate in any action research workshop, seminar, symposium etc.

On the other hand, the unusual opportunities they had participated in were found valuable. Knowledge is no something tangible objects that can be kept some where and stays evermore. Unless it has been refreshed by new sources, the knowledge they had acquired from colleges and university will be petered out.

In the same vein, teachers were also requested if they thought that the sources of their action research knowledge were only the teachers that they had taught them and the course that they had taken at college or university. Afterward, the great majority (84%) of the respondents said 'no'. In contrast, 16% of the respondents replied that the course that they had taken at college or university were the only sources of their action research knowledge. Then, it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents were keen to the other source of action research knowledge like participating in workshops, seminars, symposiums and conferences/ forums where teachers could discuss research, working collaboratively action research and sharing experiences, and reading books, journal and articles in addition to the teachers that they had taught them and the course that they had taken at college or university. It is difficult to think that adequate knowledge about action research can be acquired without involving oneself practically into conducting it. So, the EFL teachers' depending on their day-to-day practices as sources of knowledge is right.

4.1.3 Action Research Knowledge among EFL Teachers

What matter the weight of the task is to have the basic knowledge about the task and how to accomplish that task is a prerequisite. A doer should raise the question 'so what am I attempting to do?' Subsequently, this requires the existence of basic knowledge and skill to successfully complete the task. After that, this point leads to raise so what is required from EFL teachers to conduct action research in their classrooms. Accordingly, EFL teachers should have at least the preliminary knowledge concerning what action research mean and how to conduct it. As knowledge is about making good decisions and taking the best course of actions in a given situation, it must be acquired prior to begin the journey to act upon the task. Thus, to see how well EFL teachers know action

research, the process to conduct it by relating to the purpose and vision of the language teaching, the effect of their action research works on the rest of their activities and so on. In plain English, do they have the knowledge to conduct action research? To see the action research and the connection from knowledge to action to results to performance, the following statements were forwarded to respondents. Then, they were asked to choose and prioritize them based on the power of the statements in reflecting the meaning of action research.

Table 4, Action Research Knowledge among EFL Teachers

No	Item	Response																
		Alternatives	1 st		2 nd		3 rd		4 th		5 th		6 th		7 th		8 th	
			no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
11	What do you understand action research to be?(choose and prioritize them)	Developing research skills	2	8	16	68	3	12	4	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Systematic enquiry and reflection on practice done by teacher	2	8	-	-	4	16	5	20	-	-	3	12	6	24	5	20
		Renewing enthusiasm about teaching	-	-	1	4	-	-	3	12	12	48	5	20	2	8	3	12
		Collaborating work	-	-	2	8	-	-	-	-	1	4	7	28	6	24	9	36
		Identifying problems and look for improvement	21	84	3	12	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Merely statistical work	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	12	6	24	8	32	8	32
		Generating knowledge	-	-	2	8	14	56	-	-	4	16	1	4	3	12	1	4
		Means of professional development activity	-	-	1	4	3	12	13	52	5	20	3	12	-	-	-	-
		Total	25	100	25	100	25	100	25	100	25	100	25	100	25	100	25	100

As indicated in the above table 4, respondents were asked about “what do you understand action research to be?’ Then, the great majority (84%) of the respondents ranked the statement that tells ‘action research as a process of identifying problems and look for

improvement in the practices' as the first most action research to be. This idea goes in line with the definition given by Wallace (1998) who tells action research as a problem based method of professional self-development and undertaken by an individual or small group which involves systematic collection and analysis of data related to teachers every day practice. 'Developing research skills' is the second most action research to be according to the nearly three-quarter (68%) of the respondents' response. With regards to the other statements, 56% of the respondents ranked 3rd, 42% of the respondents ranked 4th and 48% of the respondents ranked 5th for the view that action research is generating knowledge, means of professional development activity this is also backed up by Wallace (1998) and renewing enthusiasm about teaching respectively.

Based on the majority of the respondents' view, action research is best defined as a process of identifying problems and look for improvement, developing research skills and generating knowledge. Most of the scholars who gave definition for action research agreed upon the points which are action research as 'systematic enquiry' and 'reflection on practice'. However, most of the respondents ranked this view at the back of the other views. Not only this but also 'action research as a collaborative work' is ranked almost at the last. Even after the definition which is 'action research as a merely statistical work'. From this, it can be deduced that EFL teachers of these high schools have not adequate understanding pertaining to action research for the reason that there are self explanatory definition of action research which have been ranked nearly at the last by a sizable number of the respondents. For example, action research is a collaborative work with colleagues which is given by Cohen and Manion (1950:174), as cited in van Lier (1988:68), define "action research is a context based collaborative activity" and " action research is a systematic enquiry conducted by teacher researchers given by Mills (2003: 5), as cited in Demircioglu (2008).

Table 5, Action Research Knowledge among EFL Teachers

No	Item	Response		
		Alternatives	Frequency	%
12.	Do you think that you have the necessary knowledge to conduct action research in English classroom?	Yes	13	56
		No	11	44
		Total	25	100
13.	Do you think that EFL teachers have to conduct action research in English classroom?	Yes	22	88
		No	3	12
		Total	25	100
	a. If your answer is 'yes', how do you think that EFL teachers development knowledge in conducting action research? By	Attending college and/or university	16	73
		Participating in action research workshops, seminar, symposium and conferences/ forums	13	59
		Reading action research projects done by teachers	17	77
		Reading books, journal and articles	9	41
		Working action research collaboratively and sharing experiences	13	59
		Others		

As shown in the above table 5 item 12, 56% of the respondents said that they have the necessary knowledge about action research and to conduct it in English classroom. But the rest 44% of the respondents replied that they have not. The respondents who said 'yes' were further asked the question that help to know the extent to which their action research knowledge can solve classroom problems. Nevertheless, almost all of them responded that it could not because to conduct action research and solve problems require deep understanding of action research and its process which they had missed. To add to this, data which was gathered through interview from teacher T₆ revealed that he started by highlighting the capacity of action research to enable them to engage more closely with their classroom problems as well as to explore the realities they face in the process of curriculum implementation and change if necessary.

We agree with the reality that action research can help us solve many classroom problems but the knowledge we have is a superficial one. We see things only in relation to 'Teachers' Result Oriented performance Appraisal'. The appraisers see only whether you submit on time or not regardless of what the content is. If we submit something which is covered by a good cover page, they accept as if it

was done well. Therefore, we give them quickly due to afraid of getting late. Even though it is not taken as professional responsibility, but it is for rank. When we do, even we do not know what we have done by ourselves. Simply we write hotchpotch ideas to look as a large material. To conduct action research well, appraisers themselves should get training concerning action research first.

/ February 22, 2011/

Accordingly, it can be possible to come up with the conclusion that EFL teachers of those schools had some theoretical knowledge of action research but they had no practical knowledge. As their view, the knowledge they had could not solve language classroom problems. They had possessed only the surface knowledge of action research. Unlike to this, Nkinyangi (2004) in Mohammed (2010) suggested that teachers must practically be at the fore front of educational reform and improvement since the quality and effectiveness of an educational system ultimately depend on the quality and nature of the interaction between teachers and students. Therefore, teachers should take care of the quality education ensuring apparatus in terms of having knowledge of them and putting into operation. Continuous search for knowledge and use that knowledge to improve practice and deliver quality education as well as quest further knowledge is what any teacher can lie on.

In case of the respondents' agreement with whether EFL teachers have to use action research, 88% said 'yes', but the rest said 'no'. Here, it can be possible to jump to conclude that almost all of the EFL teachers are in agreement with the inclusion of action research into the English language teacher education. In connection with this poll, respondents those who said 'yes' were asked how they thought that EFL teachers can development knowledge in relation to conducting action research. Then, 77%, 73%, 59%, 59% and 41% of the respondents replied that action research knowledge among EFL teachers can be developed through reading action research projects done by teachers, attending College and/or university, participating in action research workshops, seminar, symposium and conferences/ forums where teachers could discuss research, working action research collaboratively and share experiences, and reading books, journal and articles respectively. As to the above view, EFL teachers gave high priority to reading dissertations and/or thesis and action research projects, and attending College and/or university as means of action research knowledge development mechanism. Many local colleges and universities offer coursework on action research; some private organizations offer workshops and seminars on the basic principles and process of action research, and have networks that are open to interested educators. Additionally, make contact with the

regional educational laboratories are few of the means to develop action research knowledge and practices (Ferrance, 2000), and relatively appears to be agreed with the above noted EFL teachers' view.

4.1.4 EFL Teachers' Knowledge of the advantage of Action Research

Table 6, EFL Teachers' Knowledge in the merits of Action Research

No	Item	Response		
		Alternatives	Frequency	%
14	Does conducting action research benefit students in English classroom?	Yes	25	100
		No	-	-
		Total	25	100
15	If your answer for question no.14 is 'yes', how does conducting action research benefit student in English classroom? By providing students with:	Greater engagement in listening activities	19	76
		Greater engagement in speaking activities	21	84
		Greater engagement in reading activities	20	80
		Greater engagement in writing activities	15	60
		Production of more authentic language	19	76
		Low achievers' fuller engagement in certain types of group work	17	68
		Greater engagement in learning by doing	12	48
		Others		100
16	Does conducting action research benefit EFL teachers?	Yes	25	100
		No	-	-
		Total	25	100
17	If your answer for question no.16 is 'yes', how does action research benefit EFL teachers? By:	Helping EFL teachers improve practice	12	48
		Providing EFL teachers potential to impact school change	18	72
		Helping to reflecting on practices	16	64
		Helping EFL teachers evaluate material	10	40
		Helping EFL teachers develop sense of professionalism	20	80
		Helping EFL teachers sharing expertise and knowledge	13	52
		Helping EFL teachers to ensure whether their judgments are reasonably fair and accurate	3	12
		Helping EFL teachers develop subject matter knowledge	17	68
		Helping EFL teachers use variety method of language teaching	25	100
		Others	-	-

As to the above table 6 item 14, it is pleasantly surprising that all (100%) of the respondents replied that conducting action research in English classroom benefits students' English language learning. According to the majority (84%, 80%, 76%, and 76%) of the respondents' view, conducting action research in English classroom benefits students by preparing condition that invites greater engage of students in speaking, reading, listening and producing of more authentic language respectively. In general, conducting action research in English classroom fosters the greater engagement of all students in production and reception of more authentic language. This implies that EFL teachers have knowledge with regard to the benefits of conducting action research for English language learners. Even though they did not add their own view point to the list, action research can do more than those. Like action research can improve the teaching and learning process by reinforcing, modifying or changing perceptions based on informal data and non-systematic observation. This informs teachers to adjust their methods that invite students to engage in different language skill activities (Ferrance, 2000).

Respondents were also required to respond whether conducting action research benefits EFL teachers. All of the respondents answered that it benefits English language teachers. This come into being by providing potential to impact school change, help to reflect on practices, help EFL teachers develop sense of professionalism, sharing expertise and knowledge, help to use variety method of language teaching and help to develop subject matter knowledge. Unlike to this, more than half of the respondents said that action research does not help EFL teachers improve practice, evaluate material and ensure that the judgments they make are reasonably fair and accurate. "Teachers learn what it is that they are able to influence and they make changes that produce results that show change. The process provides the opportunity to work with others and to learn from the sharing of ideas" (Ferrance, 2000). Reflection and action research skills increase the probability that teachers will take more informed actions. This indicated EFL teachers had knowledge limit in the benefit that they can get by conducting action research.

4.1.5 Practical Knowledge of EFL Teachers in Action Research

Table 7, Practical Knowledge of EFL Teachers in Action Research

No	Item	Response		
			Frequency	%
18	Have you ever raised the question 'how do I improve what I am doing pertaining to action research?'	Yes	23	92
		No	2	8
		Total	25	100
19	Do you think that you have the ability how to identify and investigate the area you wish?	Yes	8	35
		No	15	65
		Total	23	100
20	How do the teachers know whether they are benefited from engaging in action research? (Choose and put tick mark in the box. You can choose more than one).	The teachers become conscious in helping their students	12	48
		They develop research skills	19	76
		They are able to solve classroom problems	5	20
		They improve their subject matter knowledge	16	64
		They become motivated to accept change	9	36
		They achieve successful language teaching learning process	24	96
		Others		

As can be seen in table 7 item 18, almost all (92%) of the respondents said they had raised the question 'how do I improve what I am doing pertaining to action research?' In the same theme, respondents were further requested if they had the ability to identify, investigate and intervene in the area they wish. Unlike to the frequency of raising the question about how to improve practices, a sizable number (65%) of them had no the ability to investigate and intervene. A question which is interwoven with the formerly raised questions was also forwarded, that is how teachers know that they were benefited from engaging in action research. From the total respondents 96%, 76% and 64% replied that EFL teachers could know whether they were benefited from engaging in action research when they got improvement and achieve successful language teaching learning process, they developed research skills and they improved their knowledge of subject matter respectively. Whereas, more than half of the respondents excluded the alternatives

teachers became conscious of their achievements in helping others, teachers became motivated to accept change, and teachers are able to solve classroom problems and so on from indicators of being benefited.

The interview findings concerning the above question are in line with the results got from questionnaire. T₇ said “To tell you frankly, most of us have no good understanding concerning action research. We have only little knowledge of it”. / February 24, 2011.

From this it can be inferred that even though EFL teachers frequently raised the idea of how to improve practices by using action research, they had not the ability on how to investigate and intervene practically. This is highly opposed by Park’s (2001:86) view which is reflective knowledge is one type of knowledge which derives from the critical theoretical tradition which argues that meaningful human knowledge must not merely understand the world but also change it.

To sum up the above findings on knowledge of action research among EFL teachers, EFL teachers have inadequate knowledge base of action research. They have taken action research and other related courses at college or university. Pre-service training only may not be enough to tape into the practical and reform unsuccessful ways of practicing English language teaching learning process like receiving instructional materials and methods passively, and use them always regardless of context and time differences. Following continuous study is necessary as the current researcher tried to quote the idea of Wald and Castleberry (2000), cited in Hailessellassie (2004:25), “A teacher can never truly teach, unless she is learning herself. A lamp never light another flame unless it continues to burn it own flame.” No more than 40% of the English language teachers of the schools under the study have participated in in-service action research trainings. On the other hand, all of the respondents have awareness in the advantage of action research to the EFL teachers and learners.

4.1.6 Practicality of Action Research among EFL Teachers

Table 8, Practicability of Action Research among EFL Teachers

NO.	ITEM	Response		
		Alternatives	FREQUENCY	%
21	Is action research practical in your school?	Yes	14	56
		No	11	44
		Total	25	100
a	If your answer is 'yes', how often?	Always	-	-
		Sometimes	6	43
		Rarely	8	57
		Total	14	100
22	Have you ever conducted action research in your English language classrooms?	Yes	12	48
		No	13	52
		Total	25	100
23	Have you got an opportunity to evaluate your own teaching in a structural manner?	Yes	25	100
		No	-	-
		Total	25	100
24	Do you accept action research as an integral part of your responsibility?	Yes	3	25
		No	9	75
		Total	12	100

As to table 8 item 21, 56% of the total respondents responded that action research is practical in their schools. Nevertheless, in terms of its frequency 57% and 43% of those who held 'yes' said that action research was done in their school rarely and sometimes respectively. Further more, 44% of the respondents answered that action research had never been conducted in their schools.

Here, one can understand that the practicality of action research in those schools is really weak. As conducting action research is one attribute for ensuring the deliverance of quality language teaching, the existence of invisible practicality of action research among EFL teachers may result in poor deliverance of quality instruction.

For item 22, 52% of the total respondents had never conducted action research in their English classroom. Only 48% EFL teachers had conducted action research. What is more,

75% of the respondents who had conducted action research said that they did not accept action research as an integral part of their responsibility.

To conclude, EFL teachers of those schools are making less effort to connect theory with practice in the actual situation as action research is a means to break curtail/disparity between theory and practice. They seem passive receivers of read made instructional materials and methods from the ministry of education, but this has not longevity in the current educational policy of our country. Hancock (1997), cited in Tadesse (2007), also stated that teachers feel shyness when they see themselves as researcher and they are reluctant to write about their teaching practices. Teachers especially EFL teachers should develop their profession, and adjust their knowledge and teaching styles with the need of the learners. One strategy for this is conducting action research in classrooms. This is what Marjorie (2005;5) backed up by saying “teachers explore action research as a tool for becoming deeper and more profound in professional knowledge, and improving foreign language instruction in the context of their own schools and classrooms”.

Though they did not use the opportunity, all (100%) of the respondents replied that they had got an opportunity to evaluate their own teaching in a structural manner. Nonetheless, as it was got from interview, they changed the manner of evaluation and they were evaluated by their fellows and/or their students. This strongly opposes to the idea that teaching is an ongoing learning process. Teachers are generally keen on improving their work; after all they are in the business of "change". This can be done through action research.

4.1.7 Results of EFL Teachers' Involvement in Action Research

Table 9, Results of EFL Teachers' Involvement in Action Research

No	Item	Response		
		Alternatives	Frequency	%
25	Does your involvement in action research bring positive change in your students' English language learning?	Yes	5	42
		No	7	58
		Total	12	100
26	Have you got any enhancement in your professional development as a result of your involvement in action research?	Yes	11	92
		No	1	8
		Total	12	100
28	Do you think that your teaching experience has impact on your involvement in action research?	Yes	12	100
		No	-	-
		Total	12	100
29	Do you think that you are reasonably clear about why you wish to get involved into the action research?	Yes	4	33
		No	8	67
		Total	12	100
30	Does action research take more time than other activities?	Yes	9	75
		No	3	25
		Total	12	100

As shown in table 9 above, 58% of those who have been involved in action research responded to the poll that the EFL teachers' involvement in action research did not affect whether positively or negatively to the students' English language learning of these schools while the rest 42% of them said that their involvement in action research improved the students' English language learning. If it is as the respondents' view, surely, conducting action research in language classroom positively affects to students' learning. But what they did is simply for the sake of getting good mark in the 'Teachers' result oriented performance appraisal'. The appraiser themselves are barriers of doing good action research as they see who and how talk(s) to them in good words that also show(s) respect. Even the Woreda Bureau themselves are fanatic to their benefit. They

are good examples to them to run to their benefit at the expense of the majority's benefit and prior to any thing. T₃ said

Sometimes I get misty-eyed over our and their work but when I see it deeply, I come up with the idea that I must seem to them...‘ወፍ እንደ አገሩ ትራሃለኝ እንደሚባል’...In English, ‘when you are at Rome, do as Romans do.’ Therefore, I also follow this principle so as not to loose my effort on nothing. (February 25, 2011)

They might be wrong in the face of professional code of ethics and the essence of action research, but they reflected that it is difficult to be led by the reality. They spoke openly in the interview that the terrible ordeal they had been through but it is difficult to reverse their opt-out from doing actual action research to benefit students in their language learning. What is so bad is the directors and the Woreda Educational Bureau told to the students furtively that their teacher would fail in the ‘Teachers’ result oriented performance appraisal’ if there is/are a student/students who get(s) below fifty in his/her subject. Then, the students do not attend class because they will get fifty or more whether they attend or not and teacher are forced to add mark to get all their students passed regardless of their teaching and the students’ knowledge in the subject. This goes far opposite with the mission of schools and directly contradicts with the idea of Thorne and Qiang (2010) which is “commitment is required to conduct action research”.

For item 26, according to the great majority (92%) of the respondents, they had got enhancement by being involved in action research. Even though they did not do action researches intrinsically and in the required way, they got improvement in their language teaching profession and in their action research competence since action research the term by itself is heuristics. In respect of their view, their involvement in action research helped them get an insight into word, sentence, and paragraph and essay organization on top of in other skills like writing, speaking, reading and so on, and in some extent also to enrich their research knowledge and skill. The respondents believed that they were not doing well but even though they were not conducting proper action research, they were getting knowledge and skill. To them, ‘even from mistake there is an intake’.

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked how they had gathered the information to identify the problem areas at the beginning and most of the respondents who conducted action research responded were identifying the problem areas from their day-to-day practices. Problems were identified by teachers in teaching learning process in

the form of self and peer assessment, questionnaires, observation, checklists/inventories, interviews, teacher-diary, and learner-diary and so on.

All (100%) of the Respondents who conducted action research thought and found out that their teaching experience had impact on their involvement in action research. Similarly they were also asked if they thought that they were reasonably clear about why they wish to get involved into the action research project. Then, 67% of the respondents pointed out that they were not clear about why they wish to get involved into the action research project. Whereas, the rest 33% responded that they were clear. Based on the interview, since they did not do action research to solve classroom problems, they were not clear.

Three-quarter (75%) of the respondent who conducted action research also replied that action research took more time than other activities, but 25 % of those who conducted action research said that action research did not take more time than other activities. Here, it can be inferred that action research takes more time. It is clear that action research takes more time than other activities. Therefore, time must be allotted to organize, study, collect data, analyze data, and for reflection and dissemination (Ferrance, 2000).

In a nutshell, it is clear that school practice could be improved and changed via continuous investigation into the situation those require/seek means of improvements and act accordingly. To this end, teachers are the immediate practitioners in the school to inquire the factors that push-back or facilitate the instructional process. This could be possible by means of conducting action research. Nonetheless, the findings obtained indicated that the ELF teachers' involvement in action research is low and so does the practicability of action research in the schools under the study. Moreover, those who involved in action research replied that even though their involvement in action research has significance for their professional development, it has no value for the English language learners' learning as they do not conduct for the sake of solving practical classroom problems. Even most of the EFL teachers who involved in action research themselves are not reasonably clear about why they wish to get involved into conducting action research except for the sake of 'Teachers' Result Oriented Performance Appraisal'.

4.1.8 EFL Teachers' Problems to Conduct/in Conducting Action Research

As the review of the different research studies indicated that EFL teachers involvement in action research may be influenced by different constraints. To see the existences of the constraints in those schools, to evaluate their degree of hindering and so no, the following questions were forwarded to respondents.

Table 10, EFL Teachers' Problems to Conduct/in Conducting Action Research

No.	Item	Response		
		Alternatives	Frequency	%
31	When you conduct action research, have you faced any problem(s)? If you have not conducted, do you expect any problem?	Yes	24	96
		No	1	4
		Total	25	100
32	If your answer for item no.31 is 'yes', tick from the following lists.	Lack of knowledge	19	79
		Lack of time	16	67
		Limited funds	21	88
		Work load	15	63
		Problem in formulating and focusing problems	8	33
		Problem in planning, acting, monitoring and reflecting properly	9	38
		Problem in writing action research report	5	21
		Lack of confidence	2	8
		Criticism from senior teachers and colleagues	6	25
		others	2	8
34	Does the curriculum provide you with autonomy to carry out action research in your English classroom?	Yes	14	56
		No	11	44
		Total	25	100
35	Does your school give an incentive when EFL teachers conduct action research?	Yes	4	16
		No	21	84
		Total	25	100

As seen from table 10 item 31, almost all (96%) of the participants said that for those who had conducted action research they faced and for those who had not had they expect problems in/to conduct action research. When the researcher prioritizes the problems according to the respondents' response; limited funds, lack of knowledge, lack of time,

work load, lack of confidence, problem in formulating and focusing problems, criticism from senior teachers and colleagues, problem in writing action research report, and problem in planning, acting, monitoring and reflecting. Due to these problems, the EFL teachers remained uninvolved in conducting action research. This result agrees with the results found by Adane (2000), cited in Kiflom (2009; 19). The following factors are among the major problems that were considered as persisting problems in conducting action research:

Heavy work load, absence of library and laboratory facilities, the problem of up-to-date journal and books, absence of budget, absence of experienced researchers, lack of encouragement and administrative supports, absence of research link with schools even with colleges, absence of well established effective and autonomous organizational structure for research, and the absence of research culture(p.19).

In addition, Taye (1993), in Ashenafi (2007), stated that the absence of incentive is the problem well recognized by most researchers but still receiving a heap of sympathy. Teachers wishing to conduct research into their own classrooms, however, are faced with a host of problems. Not least among these are lack of time, lack of expertise or skills in research, lack of support especially from within their own institution, and threats to their self-image as a teacher. The problem of lack of research expertise or skills has a knock-on effect causing further problems. Research designed and conducted by teachers new to research is likely to have low reliability (e.g. the findings are not likely to be generalizable) and low validity (e.g. the research may not actually produce findings which address the targeted research topic). Because of these problems, the research is also likely to have low publishability - which may obstruct achievement of the teacher's real reason for conducting research, namely, to get published given the heavy stress placed on publishing research by the Ministry of Education and universities at present. (Allwright, 1993 and Nunan, 1993).

As regards item 34 in the same vein, 56% of the participants made clear that the curriculum provided them with autonomy to carry out action research in their English classroom. Quite the opposite, 44% of the participants said that the curriculum did not provide them with autonomy to carry out action research in their English classroom. Pertaining to item 35, it is amazing that more than three quarter of the respondents stated

that their school did not give them an incentive when EFL teachers conduct action research. Even though the curriculum gives them autonomy, their schools do not encourage and support them to conduct action research.

According to the data got from interview, the schools have no materials that help teachers conduct action research. They pointed out that schools gave them only pen and paper then ordered them to run their activities. Even the libraries are empty. Being in this school, it is difficult to conduct action researches that bring change in the instructional processes. T₄ said

Good, in this school, it is difficult to say that there are personnel that have some hint about action research. They told us to do different activities including action research, but they do not give any incentive even the basic materials to conduct action research except pen and paper. Moreover, they forced us to have 30 periods per week. Even though we do not have enough knowledge to conduct action research, it could be possible to develop knowledge through practices (by try and error). But the school principals and the Woreda educational Bureau evens the regional state of Tigray by them do not encourage EFL teachers to conduct action research. Being in this situation, to say I can conduct action research is out of truth. (February 25, 2011)

They also confirmed that ‘Teachers’ Result Oriented Performance Appraisal’ turns into head-ache of conducting productive activities like action research in classroom. As view of the respondents, most of the appraisers have no knowledge about the ‘Teachers’ Result Oriented Performance Appraisal’. EFL teachers carried out activities in the way that brought quality teaching as they are closed to the actual teaching learning process going on in the classroom, but that would not be in the mode that the appraisers expect. This made teachers’ effort invalid in the face of ‘Teachers’ Result Oriented Performance Appraisal’. Hence, teachers were focusing on observable and quantifiable types of activities excluding productive behavioral and academic tasks as they thought that they could be benefited from the appraisal.

4.1.9 Attitude of EFL Teachers towards Action Research

Although knowledge and skill are the basic building blocks for human beings to perform certain tasks, the way that human beings think and feel about those tasks is a driving force for them whether towards the tasks or away from the tasks. Having positive attitude towards a task recharges human effort whereas having negative attitude towards that task has a devastating effect on one’s effort to accomplish the task.

It is basic for EFL teachers, as they are being human, to have positive attitude, in addition to ability and quality of appreciation of the nature, process and application of action research skill, towards action research in order to conduct it.

To know the attitude of EFL teachers towards action research, they were asked to show their reactions to the following list of statements by choosing one among the alternatives given below ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

SA =strongly agree, A = agree, U = undecided, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree

Table 11, attitude of EFL Teachers towards Action Research

No	Item	Response											
		SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No.	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
37	Professional development for EFL teachers is necessary.	19	76	6	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	100
38	Action research helps to EFL teachers develop their profession.	18	72	7	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	100
39	Action research has not to do with classroom practices.					1	4	11	44	13	52	25	100
40	All EFL teachers should be involved in conducting action research.	5	20	11	44	3	12	1	4	2	8	25	100
41	Action research has positive impact on EFL teachers' subject matter knowledge	5	20	11	44	3	12	1	4	2	8	25	100
42	Conducting action research in English classroom improves classroom practices?	17	68	6	24	2	8	-	-	-	-	25	100
43	Exploring relevant questions on personal teaching approaches (theoretical, practical, and ethical) is necessary.	13	52	7	28	2	8	3	12	-	-	25	100
44	I always want to conduct action research in classroom because it is productive.	2	8	9	36	6	24	5	20	3	12	25	100

In the above table 11 item 37, all of the respondents (76% and 24% strongly agree and agree respectively) replied that they were in favor of the idea that professional

development for EFL teachers is necessary and it indicated that at least they have the rationale of professional development and positive outlook towards it. Here, what is left is how to develop it. In line with this view, Hailessellassie (2004) said that learning can never be completed at any point. Past accomplishment cannot contend us at present. He also added by citing Wald and Castleberry (2000) "a teacher can never truly teach unless she is learning herself. A lamp can never light another flame unless it continues to burn its own flame".

In item 38, all of the respondents indicated that action research can help to develop one's profession by choosing strongly agree and agree 72% and 28% of the respondents respectively. It can be said that all the EFL teachers of these schools have positive attitude and backed up the relationship between action research and language teaching. Hailessellassie (2004:40) supported this idea by saying "action research should be liked as it is an essential professional development opportunity render as it is helpful to generate knowledge, to disseminate it, to win public esteem to teachers and their professional."

Concerning item 39, almost all of the respondents disfavor the idea that action research has not to do with classroom practices by replying 52% and 44% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree respectively. So, as it can be seen from the respondents view, possibly it can be concluded that EFL teachers have an understanding in the relationship between action research and classroom practices, and they support to the idea that action research has to do with classroom practices.

When we come to item 40, 44% and 20% of the total respondents choose 'agree' and 'strongly agree' to the idea that all EFL teachers should be involved in conducting action research. Whereas, the rest respondents were lay on the alternatives 'undecided', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' with the aforementioned idea. This reveals that even though more than half of the respondents support for EFL teachers' involvement in conducting action research, still there are teachers who have not clear standing on EFL teachers' involvement.

As noted above, though knowledge is an important part to conduct teachers' action research, one must not lose sight of the fact that the development of appropriate attitudes in teachers towards action research. That is, even where teachers possess the technical

know-how required to do research, they may still be deterred from doing so by, for example, misconceptions about its purposes, or restrictive evaluations of their own authority and knowledge in the classroom. The following questions are to see the over all attitude of EFL teachers towards action research.

Table 12, Attitude of EFL Teachers towards Action Research

No.	Item	Response		
		Alternatives	Frequency	%
45	Do you like conducting action research?	Yes	23	92
		No	2	8
		Total	25	100
46	To what extent are you interested in conducting action research?	Very high	6	26
		High	13	57
		Medium	4	17
		Low	-	-
		Very low	-	-
47	How do you suggest your and your colleagues' attitude towards action research?	Positive	21	84
		Negative	4	16
		Total	25	100

As seen from table 12 item 45, almost all (92%) of the respondents replied that they like conducting action research. For item 46, 26%, 57% and 17% of the respondents were interested in conducting action research very high, high and low respectively. Similarly, they were also asked about their attitude towards action research and more than three-quarter (84%) of the total respondents said that they had positive attitude towards conducting action research. Besides, in an open-ended questions, teachers were asked to what issues they were interested in to conduct action researching and the great majority of the teachers explained that they had interest to conduct action research on language teaching problems in schools, how to decrease the examination anxiety of students, new things in the language teaching, effective language learning strategies and problems concerning the language teaching learning in general.

One can possibly understand that EFL teachers in the schools liked and had positive attitude towards action research, and they had an interest to conduct action research on problems related to language teaching learning.

The interview findings concerning the above question were in line with the responses found through questionnaire. For example, T₃ said “I have positive attitude though the knowledge I have is limited. I have interest in the future I will develop my knowledge and my participation in action research.” In addition, T₅ told “yes, even though most of EFL teachers have not idea about action research, they have an interest to solve classroom problems. This indicates an interest in action research activities.”

To summarize the above findings, EFL teachers in those schools have positive attitude towards action research and they have an interest in conducting action research on problems those have to do with language teaching learning. They also have the rationale of professional development and positive out look towards it. In addition, all of them are in agreement with the view that action research can help EFL teachers develop their profession and they backed up the relationship between action research and language teaching classroom. However, the findings indicated that even though more than half of the respondents support for EFL teachers’ involvement in conducting action research, still there are teachers who have not clear standing on EFL teachers’ involvement.

4.1.10 EFL Teachers Habit of Using Action Research Results to improve Classroom Practices

From the beginning, the primary reason that initiated the researcher to this study and forced him to assess the knowledge and practice of action research was to study the utilization of action research results. Afterward, this assessment was not only for the sake of mere investigation of the current status of knowledge, practice and attitude of EFL teachers with respect to action research but also to see the function of action research in the schools in language teaching learning process vis-à-vis the mission of secondary and preparatory school language teaching and learning practices. For that matter, it has been essential to focus on the idea that whether teachers use action research in the language teaching learning process. Related to this issue, questions were forwarded by means of questionnaire and interviews. Then the following responses were elicited.

Table 13, EFL Teachers Habit of Using Action Research Results to improve Classroom Practices

No	Item	Responses		
		Alternatives	Frequency	%
48	Do you keep your action research paper properly?	Yes	7	58
		No	5	42
		Total	12	100
49	Does the school store the EFL teachers' action research papers safely?	Yes	18	72
		No	7	28
		Total	25	100
50	Do you share the findings you and/or they get with your colleagues?	Yes	8	32
		No	17	68
		Total	25	100
51	Do you use your colleagues' and/or your action research results to improve classroom practices and create other problem areas?	Yes	8	32
		No	17	68
		Total	25	100
53	Have you got any difficulty in the ways in which you use the action research results?	Yes	3	38
		No	5	62
		Total	8	100

In the above table 13 item 48, respondents were asked if they keep their action research paper properly and 58% of the respondents who conducted action research keep their action research paper properly, whereas, the rest 42% of them did not. Similar, 72% of the total respondents replied that the school stored the EFL teachers' action research papers safely. For that reason, it can be understood that both the school and the individual EFL teachers who involved in action research kept the action research papers safely.

Item 50 shows that 68% of the total respondents did not share their colleague's and/or their own findings among the EFL teachers of the same school as well as other schools nearby. Related to the above polls, in terms of using action research findings to improve classroom practices, nearly three-quarter (68%) of the total respondents said that they did not use their colleagues' and/or their own action research findings to improve classroom practices and create other problem areas. Unlike to this, 32% said that they have used.

Furthermore, respondents were asked if they agree with the idea that teachers may found the action research findings unrelated to their daily classroom work. Conversely, all the respondents who conducted and/or used action research results did not agree with the

research and nearly one-third of the respondents did not use action research results to improve classroom practices, action research results were found related and important to EFL teachers' daily work. This does go in line with Johnsons' (2002; 13) definition action research as the process of studying a real school or classroom situations to understand and improve the quality of actions or instructions. It is a systematic and orderly way for teachers to observe their practice or to explore a problem and give a possible course of action. He also stated that it is a type of inquiry that is preplanned, organized and that can be shared with others. Data gathered via interview from T₅ is:

For example, it was possible to arrange meeting in the weekend at school level or Woreda level and encourage action researchers to present their findings as much as possible they could. By this means, teachers can be made use their own or their colleagues' results to improve classroom practices and conduct similar activities. But this habit is not yet born. (February 27, 2011)

Generally speaking, action research was incorporated into the educational system in general and into language teaching learning in particular to improve and/or change the teaching learning process, and action research results were to be implemented in classroom situations in the direction of see the outcome. In contrast, the EFL teachers of those schools did not share the action research findings with their colleagues and use to improve English language classroom practices.

To the question "how could other teachers get involved in action research? Let others hear your own voice." According to the respondents view such was the assumption that underlying the need to stop teachers from living in professional quarantine. Action research is a means for the realization of the value of their own voice as professionals and encourages them to make themselves heard within the educational community, through both the dissemination of results and further engagement in action research project-like activities. As teachers are quite often aware of the low status of their own voice, they tend to adopt a defensive strategy and resist public exposure, and where professional knowledge is built from experience as happens within collaborative action-research, self-assertiveness and self-confidences are expected to arise, along with a sense of empowerment and a willingness to share one's work with others. After that EFL teachers become influential in the policy making that needed at them and teaching learning process.

Concerning the open ended question on the relationship between language and action research, almost all of the respondents stated that action research is done by using language and for improving practices including the language teaching learning practices. Even when they conduct action research, they develop their language skills. Therefore, they have good relationship.

4.2 Data on the Availability of Support from School and Directors

Fulan (1991) cited in Tadesse (2007:61) suggested that successful implementation of school reform and curricular innovations depend on the administrators (principals) ability to help practitioners to change and develop new understanding and skills. Much effort and leadership is required to generate a 'culture' of quality education. Principals of schools have the responsibility to organize the school personnel and to deliver quality education. For that matter, they have to have at least the information about the general over view of the work of the teachers in the school. To explore the current status of action research in accordance with the EFL teachers, it was found necessary to get ideas from the principals of the schools. Accordingly, questionnaires were distributed to and interviews were made upon the schools principals concerning on the aforesaid issues, and the following results were found.

To begin with the knowledge of EFL teachers in action research, four school principals said that EFL teachers have knowledge in action research but it is too limited to use it in the practical world. To tape into the practical world, there should be practical knowledge. But one school principal replied that entirely not. To consolidate it with the data gathered through interview, in the interview discussion, they forwarded that not only EFL teachers but other department teachers as well have no action research knowledge which can be used practically. They know what action research mean partly, some features and some importance in teaching but no more the practical procedures to conduct it.

With reference to the EFL teachers' attitude towards action research, four of the school principals held that they have positive attitude but one school principal. As to the school principals view, even though they have positive attitude, it is not as such because to say positive attitude there should be some practical reflections. But here it is so minimal. It

can possibly be concluded here is that EFL teachers have nearly positive mind-set but not to the extent that is expected.

To come to the EFL teachers' involvement in teachers' action research, it is so minimal. As the school principals' clarification, it is better to say no involvement. The school principals said that most of the time teachers were told to do action research in view of the fact that there is widespread of implementation of continuous professional development (CPD) in schools but they want to develop their profession by service years more willingly than working action research for the dual purpose.

Regarding the school support for action researchers, school principals were asked and all of them said that schools some time gave incentive and material support but it was not enough resulted from shortage of school budget and resources. Schools also put specific time table for EFL teachers to attend and undertake action research, seminar, workshop, conference e.t.c. but the shortage of budget, computer, laboratory rooms, references, and other materials were still with them. Therefore, they recommended for EFL teachers that teachers should have understood this problem and conduct by using the materials found at hand. Moreover, they said that EFL teachers rarely use the findings to improve classroom practices. The action research papers were simply put in shelves.

Unlike to the scarcity of resources, all the school principals replied that they recognized action and other productive activities as important activities of ensuring quality education.

To conclude, EFL teachers of these schools have limited knowledge of action research and their involvement is also minimal. Unlike to that, they have positive attitude towards action research. When we see the school support, it is not as such resulted from shortage of budget.

4.3 Review of Action Research Documents Done by EFL Teachers

Action research is a form of self reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations (e.g. schools) in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out in a wider sense (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 162). It incorporates identifying problem area, gather data, interpret data, act upon evidence, evaluate and reflect results, and next step create other problem areas. Based on this, the researcher tried to see the action research work of some of the EFL teachers in the high schools which were under the study. To start with one teachers' work, the topic for his study was "studying the attitude of English language learners towards plasma broadcasting in Nebelet secondary and preparatory school in 2009". First, he had chosen the topic. Then he wrote chapter one (i.e. the back ground of the study, statement of the problem, basic research questions, objectives of the study, delimitation of the study and limitation of the study), chapter two (related literature review), chapter three (research design and methodology), chapter four (data analysis and interpretation) and finally in chapter five he came up with the following conclusions:

- The attitude of English language learners towards the plasma broadcasting is negative.
- The plasma teachers go faster than that of the students' pace of learning. Therefore, students get difficulty to follow the plasma teacher and note down the necessary points.
- The pronunciation that the plasma teacher uses is too close to the native speakers. Then most of the students do not listen to the instruction properly.

Based on these conclusions, he put the following recommendations:

- The plasma teachers should have to use the pronunciation that non-native speakers can listen.
- Different concerned bodies should give emphasis on adjusting the speed that the plasma teachers use with the capacity of different students in the classroom.
- Students should get enough reference materials.

There are also two teachers (one from Maiknetal secondary school and one from Weri secondary school) who have done their research on “studying female participation in English language classroom in Maiknetal secondary school in 2009” and “studying problem of students in speaking skill in Weri secondary school in 2010” respectively. To do their research, they followed the same procedure with the former teacher who has done on “studying the attitude of English language learners towards plasma broadcasting in Nebelet secondary and preparatory school in 2007” and they arrived at certain conclusions and recommendations.

There is one teacher who conducted his research using another procedure rather than using the procedure that the above mentioned teachers have used. Since he was voluntary his name to be mentioned, I tried to call by his name. His name is Alembrihan and he is teaching English in Maiknetal secondary school. He has done two action research papers. To start with the first one, the topic was “why some students become shy in the English class in Maiknetal secondary school in 2009?” first he identified the shy students in the classroom by observing during his class. Then he told all the students to write letter to their mother and in the following day he ordered the supposed shy students to read the letter they had written to their mother one by one. Again he told them to write a letter to their friends and they also read out to the class. Thirdly, he told them to write a letter to the teacher himself. They wrote a letter and read it in the classroom. Finally, he gets an improvement in the shy students. Especially one female student from the former shy students became an outstanding student in class participation.

The second action research done by this teacher is “why students make spelling error in writing?” first he identified the problem by using daily checklists. Then wrote the most common words that students can come across per day on posters and fixed on the wall for a week. After one week he picked up and he has got an improvement in students’ problem of spelling errors.

To conclude, the former three teachers conducted their action research with more or less close to the procedures that can be followed in conducting applied research and they came up with certain conclusions and recommendations. But the latter one, first he identified the problem, intervened into the problem and finally he came up with the reflection of

the results that he got by intervening into the problems. Therefore, in the former teachers there is some knowledge limitation in differentiating what action research is and what about the other types of research. Whereas, in the latter teacher, almost there is good knowledge and skills in action research for the reason that as a minimum he follows all the necessary action research steps. From this, one can understand that, even from those who conducted action research practically, there is knowledge difference and limit.

4.4 Summary of the Major Findings

The broad objective of this study was to investigate whether EFL teachers have the knowledge of action research and implement the knowledge they have in English language classrooms in five high schools of Central Zone of Tigray Regional State. To attain this objective, the researcher devised the basic research questions mentioned in chapter one.

To get these basic questions answered, questionnaires were employed as a main instrument of data collection. First, the developed questions were submitted to the advisor and based on the comments got from advisor, questionnaires were corrected. Peer comments were also made from the colleagues. Later the pilot study was conducted on four EFL teachers. Respondent who were involved in the pilot study were asked to give comments and suggestions. Based on the comments and suggestions got from the pilot study, questionnaires were modified. Lastly, the modified questionnaires were administered to 25 EFL teachers and 5 school principals.

In addition, interviews were conducted with 8 randomly chosen EFL teachers and 5 school principals.

A document analysis was also carried out on action research documents written by EFL teachers.

Finally, the data obtained by the use of questionnaire, interview and document analysis from the target population were analyzed via/by means of frequency, percentage and ranking scales. Hence, the researcher comes up with the following major findings:

- a. All (100%) of the respondents had taken courses linked to action research. Nevertheless, more than half of the respondents (56%) had not taken part in any action research seminars, workshops and so on after they graduated.
- b. The great majority (84%) of the respondents ranked the statement that tells action research as a process of 'identifying problems and look for improvement' in practices as the first most action research to be. 'Developing research skills' is the second most action research to be according to the nearly three-quarter (68%) of the respondents. But the statements which inform 'action research as a systematic enquiry and reflection on practice' and 'action research as a collaborative work' are ranked by sizable number of respondents almost behind of the other definitions.

- c. All (100%) of the respondents replied that conducting action research in English classroom benefits both students' English language learning and English language teachers
- d. Almost all (92%) of the participants said that they had raised the question 'how do I improve what I am doing pertaining to action research?' But 65% of the respondents have no the ability to investigate and intervene into problems practically using action research.
- e. More than half (56%) of the total respondents responded that action research is practical in their schools, but on the subject of its frequency, 57% and 43% of the teachers said that action research was done in their school rarely and sometimes respectively. On the other hand, 44% of the respondents answered that action research had never been conducted in their schools. Moreover, 52% of the total respondents had never conducted action research in their English classroom. Only 48% EFL teachers had conducted action research in their career life.
- f. Though they did not use the opportunity, all (100%) of the respondents had got chance to evaluate their own teaching in a structural manner.
- g. In an open-ended question, respondents were asked how they had gathered the information to identify the problem areas at the beginning. As most of the respondents who conducted action research responded, were identifying the problem areas from their day-to-day practices by way of self and peer assessment, questionnaires, observation, checklists/inventories, interviews, teacher-diary, and learner-diary and so on.
- h. All (100%) of the Respondents who conducted action research thought and found out that their teaching experience had impact on their involvement in action research.
- i. The finding indicated that (96%) of the participants for those who had conducted action research they faced and for those who had not had they expect problems in/to conduct action research. When the researcher prioritizes the problems according to the respondents' response; limited funds, lack of knowledge, lack of time, work load, lack of confidence, problem in formulating and focusing problems, criticism from senior teachers and colleagues, problem in writing action research report, and problem in planning, acting, monitoring and reflecting.

- j. As the finding, 56% of the participants said that the curriculum provided them with autonomy to carry out action research in their English classroom. On contrary, more than three-quarter of the respondents stated that their school did not give them an incentive when EFL teachers conduct action research.
- k. All of the respondents (76% and 24% of them choose strongly agree and agree respectively) replied that they were in favor of the idea that professional development for EFL teachers is necessary.
- l. Almost all of the respondents disfavor the idea that action research has not to do with classroom practices as 52% and 44% of the respondents choose strongly disagree and disagree respectively.
- m. More than three-quarter (84%) of the total respondents responded that they have positive towards action research. Moreover, almost all (92%) of the respondents answered that they like conducting action research and 57% of the respondents' interest in conducting action research is also high.
- n. The finding indicated that 58% of the respondents who were involved in action research keep their action research paper properly. Similarly, 72% of the total respondents pointed out that the school stored the EFL teachers' action research papers safely. However, 68 % of the total respondents did not share their colleague's and/or their own findings among the EFL teachers of the same school as well as other schools nearby. Besides, they did not use the action research findings to improve classroom practices and create other problem areas.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study conducted has yielded some conclusions based on the findings that were summarized in the previous section. It is now possible to derive several conclusions based on the objectives presented in the first chapter. These conclusions are the following:

5.1.1 Although all the EFL teachers had taken courses which may help them conduct action research and they believe that in-service training is necessary, their participation in action research workshop, seminar or other training is not adequate. Significantly, this resulted in the considerable proportion of EFL teachers in those schools fail to have practical knowledge pertaining to action research. They possess some theoretical knowledge and by using that knowledge they raise a question of how to improve practices using action research, but due to the lack of required knowledge to investigate and intervene practically, that question either remain daydream or is done inadequately.

5.1.2 The association of action research with English language teaching in these schools is weak, and less satisfactory action research is being done in classrooms/schools although the current education and training policy says publicly that focus will be given on conducting action research. The findings portrayed that insignificant number of EFL teachers had been engaged in action research activities. The majority of the EFL teachers remained uninvolved in conducting action research thus far. This implies that EFL teachers are making less and less effort which is not expected by the teacher education and the society to dig deep into and reflect on their own day-to-day problems in the classroom/school, this may further result in delivering poor quality education which blocks the development of the country. When they did rarely, what they have done is simply superficial for the sake of getting good point in result oriented performance appraisal. The appraiser themselves are barriers of doing good action research as they see who and how talk(s) to them in good words that also show respect. Even the Woreda Bureau

themselves are fanatic to their benefit. They are good examples to EFL teachers to run to their benefit at the expense of the majority's benefit and prior to any thing.

- 5.1.3 The findings of this study have indicated that there are different constraints that hinder EFL teachers of those schools from conducting action research. Of the listed problems: limited funds, lack of knowledge, lack of time, work load, lack of confidence, problem in formulating and focusing problems, criticism from senior teachers and colleagues, problem in writing action research report, and problems in planning, acting, monitoring and reflecting were considered as serious problems by the EFL teachers. In addition to those, 'Teachers' Result Oriented Performance Appraisal' also turns into head-ache of conducting productive activities like action research in classroom. This is resulted from lack of knowledge about the 'Teachers' Resulted Oriented Performance Appraisal' and responsibility among the appraisers.
- 5.1.4 The EFL teachers have positive attitude towards action research. They are in agreement with the inclusion of action research in language education. This is acceptable and needs to be encouraged behavior of EFL teachers.
- 5.1.5 Generally speaking, action research is being incorporated into the educational system in general and into language teaching learning in particular to improve and/or change the language teaching learning process, and action research results were to be implemented in classroom situations to see the outcome. In contrast, even though both the school and the individual EFL teachers who have been involved in action research keep the action research papers safely, the EFL teachers of those schools did neither share the findings with their colleagues nor use the results to improve English language classroom practices.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations were suggested.

- 5.2.1 EFL teachers who are not acquainted with the basic action research knowledge and skill should up-grade their knowledge and skill by reading different action research references, instead of expecting formal training from the ministry of education.
- 5.2.2 Action research enables the EFL teachers to look into what interlocks teaching and learning in the English language classroom. Moreover, it helps them identify potential barriers in ensuring quality language teaching and learning process. Therefore, EFL teachers should use action research as an integral classroom practices rather than being under pressure of students and environment constantly.
- 5.2.3 School administrators (principals) seem to lack the necessary knowledge/expertise required to deliver necessary school programmes like action research to be undertaken, the ministry of education should assign educators who are specialized in research to implement such programmes.
- 5.2.4 What is more, teachers can be asked by the school principals and Woreda Educational Bureau to conduct and write action research by the end of every semester they teach. Their action research papers should also get appropriate feedbacks that lend a hand to the ELT teachers in improving their capability in action research.
- 5.2.5 If action research is to be done by the EFL teachers, it should not be imposed upon teachers simply as an obligation come from the ministry of education to make teachers burdened rather the school principals and Woreda Educational Bureau should convince teachers that ‘action research is done by teachers for teachers’. It is not done for other peoples
- 5.2.6 Teachers’ professional learning has a critical influence on students’ learning outcomes and much attention has been paid to understand how effective ongoing professional learning for teachers can be achieved in schools. One way for this is involving teachers in conducting action research in their school and/or classrooms. Then, such benefits should be further enhanced by encouraging teachers to systematically document, publish and present their action research initiatives so they have to be supported to share in a wider community of professional practice.

- 5.2.7 Support from the school, and if available, from a facilitator is invaluable when teachers are conducting teacher action research in their own language classrooms. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged by giving incentives and material support to continue with research practices in their classes, write reports on their research, make use of their findings to improve language classroom practices and share the results with their colleagues. In this way teacher-researchers will have the potential to boost their professional image and turn into effective agents of change.
- 5.2.8 To conduct action research successfully, a professional development plan at the school level should be developed, implemented, and sustained to provide teachers with opportunities to develop a knowledge base of action research. In addition, opportunities to dialogue, problem-solve, offer support, and share action research studies are critical during implementation. This plan of professional development should be supported and maintained by the school principals and the Woreda Educational bureau.
- 5.2.9 Prepare school professionals to be researchers from the beginning of their coursework. As part of the licensure process, greater emphasis can be placed on the role of research- and data-driven instructional decision making in the profession. Regardless of their roles, creating an atmosphere of expectation will help school professionals to be more intentional in their research activities.
- 5.2.10 the researcher recommends that further study should be conducted on the ways of giving action research training for teachers, attitude of school principals and Woreda Educational Bureau towards action research, and the relevance of conducting action research findings.

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Appendices

Appendix A

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires for EFL Teachers

Dear Respondents

This study is designed to study the knowledge and practice of action research among EFL teachers' with particular reference to four high schools and one preparatory school of Tigray region central zone. It is being conducted for the partial fulfillment of the masters of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The information obtained from you using this questionnaire is of great value for the success of the present study. Therefore, the researcher requests your genuine response to all the questions listed below. Put tick mark (✓) in the box of your choice.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation and patience!

Questions Related to EFL Teachers' Background Profile

1. Age -
20-29 yrs 30-39yrs 40-49yrs 50yrs +
2. Gender -
Male Female
3. School
Maiknetal Secondary School Weri Secondary School
Tadelach Hailu Secondary School Weri Preparatory school
Nebelet Secondary School
4. How many years English teaching experience do you have?
0-3yrs 4-15 yrs 16-25ys 26+
5. How many years have you been teaching English at this school?
0-3yrs 4-15yrs 16-25yrs 26+
6. Do you have an interest to continue teaching English?
Yes No

PART I

Questions Related to EFL Teachers' Knowledge in Action Research

7. Have you ever taken any course related to action research?
Yes [] No []
8. Have you ever participated in action research workshop, seminar, symposium etc?
Yes [] No []
9. If your answer for question no. 8 is 'yes', have you got the training useful?
Yes [] No []
10. Do you think that the sources of your action research knowledge are only the course that you have taken at college or university?
Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'no', what are the other sources? Please explain them.

11. Do you think that EFL teachers have to conduct action research in English classroom?

Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how do you think that EFL teachers development action research knowledge? (Choose and prioritize)

Participating in action research workshops, seminar and symposium []

Attending courses at colleges and universities []

Reading action research projects []

Reading books, journal and articles []

Working collaboratively action research and sharing experiences []

Please cite if there is any other way

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

12. What do you understand action research to be? (Choose and prioritize)

Developing research skills []

Systematic enquiry conducted by teacher []

Renewing enthusiasm of teaching []

Collaboration work []

Identifying problems and look for improvement []

Merely statistical work []

Generating knowledge []

Means of professional development activity []

Please cite if there is any other way

13. Do you think that you have the necessary knowledge to conduct action research in English classroom? Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how well you are able to solve classroom problems? Please explain.

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

14. Does conducting action research benefit students in English classroom?

Yes []

No []

15. If your answer for question no.14 is 'yes', how does conducting action research benefit student in English classroom? By providing students with:

Greater engagement in listening activities []

Greater engagement in speaking activities []

Greater engagement in reading activities []

Greater engagement in writing activities []

Production of more authentic language []

Low achievers' fuller engagement in certain types of group work []

Greater engagement in learning by doing []

Please cite if there is any more

16. Does conducting action research benefit EFL teachers?

Yes []

No []

17. If your answer for question no.16 is 'yes', how does action research benefit EFL teachers? By providing

Help teachers improve practice []

Potential impact to school change []

Reflecting on practices []

Help EFL teachers evaluate material []

Help EFL teachers develop sense of professionalism []

Sharing expertise and knowledge []

Help to ensure that the judgments they make are reasonably fair and accurate []

Help to develop subject matter knowledge []

Help to use variety method of language teaching []

Please cite if there is any more

18. Have you ever raised the question 'how do I improve what I am doing pertaining to action research?'

Yes []

No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how do you think can it be improved?

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

19. Do you think that you have the ability how to identify problem area that you wish to investigate and intervene?

Yes []

No []

20. How do the teachers know they are benefited from engaging in action research? (Choose and prioritize)

Teachers become conscious in helping their students []

They develop research skills []

They are able to solve classroom problems []

They improve their subject matter knowledge []

They become motivated to accept change []

They achieve successful teaching learning process []

Please cite if there is any more

PART II

Questions Related to EFL Teachers' Practice in Conducting Action Research

21. Is action research practical among EFL teachers in your school?

Yes []

No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how often?

Always []

Some times []

rarely []

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

22. Have you got an opportunity to evaluate your own teaching in a structural manner?

Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how? Please explain it.

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

23. Have you ever conducted action research in your English language classrooms?

Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', please list some of the topics that you have done on

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

24. Do you use action research as an integral part of your responsibility?

Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', in what mode?

Collaboratively [] Individually []

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

25. Does your involvement in action research bring positive change in your students' English language learning?

Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how?

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

26. Have you got any enhancement in your professional development as a result of your involvement in action research?

Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how?

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

27. How did you gather the information to identify the problem areas at the beginning?

28. Do you think that your teaching experience has impact on your involvement in action research?

Yes [] No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', in what way? Please specify it.

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

29. Do you think that you are reasonably clear about why you wish to get involved into the action research?

Yes [] No []

30. Does action research take more time than other activities?

Yes [] No []

PART III

Questions Related to EFL Teachers' Problem in Conducting Action Research

31. When you conduct action research, have you faced any problem(s)?

Yes [] No []

32. If your answer for item no.31 is 'yes', choose and prioritize from the following lists.

Lack of knowledge []

Lack of confidence []

Lack of time []

Limited funds []

Work load []

Lack of material support []

Lack of formulating problems []

Problem of writing action research report []

Criticism from senior teachers and colleagues []

Lack of proper planning, acting, monitoring and reflecting []

Please specify if there are any other problems

33. If your answer for item no.31 is 'yes', how did you/can you solve it or them?

34. Does the curriculum provide you with autonomy to carry out action research in your English classroom?

Yes []

No []

35. Does your school give you an incentive when you conduct action research?

Yes []

No []

36. What do you think to be arranged as a solution for EFL teachers to improve their knowledge and involvement in action research?

PART IV

Questions Related to EFL Teachers' Attitude towards Conducting Action Research (tick under your choice)

ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37. Professional development for EFL teachers is necessary.					
38. Action research helps teacher develop their profession.					
39. Action research has not to do with EFL classroom practices.					
40. All EFL teachers should be involved in conducting action research.					
41. Action research has positive impact on EFL teachers' subject matter knowledge					
42. Conducting action research in English classroom improves classroom practices?					
43. Exploring relevant questions on personal teaching approaches (theoretical, practical, and ethical) are necessary.					
44. I always want to conduct action research in classroom because it is productive.					

45. Do you like conducting action research?

Yes []

No []

46. To what extent are you interested in conducting action research?

Very high []

high []

medium []

low []

very low []

47. How do you suggest your and your colleagues' attitude towards action research?

PART V

Questions Related to EFL Teachers' Habit in using Action Research Results

48. Do you keep your action research paper properly?

Yes []

No []

49. Does the school store the EFL teachers' action research papers safely?

Yes []

No []

50. Do you share your finding with your colleagues?

Yes []

No []

51. Do you use your and your colleagues' findings day-to-day practices?

Yes []

No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how often do you use?

Always []

sometimes []

rarely []

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

52. Do you use your and your colleagues' findings to create other problem areas?

Yes []

No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', to what extent do you use?

Always []

sometimes []

rarely []

b. If your answer is 'no', why?

53. To what extent do you agree with the idea that teachers may found the action research findings unrelated to their daily classroom work?

Consider reasons for your response

54. Have you got any difficulty in the ways in which you use the action research results?

Yes []

No []

55. How can you get other teachers involved? Let others hear your own voice!

56. What do you think the relationship between language teaching and action research?

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix B
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
Questionnaires for Directors

Dear Respondents

This research is designed to study the action research knowledge and practice of EFL teachers' with particular reference to five high schools of central zone in Tigray Regional State. It is being conducted for the partial fulfillment of the masters of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The information obtained from you using this questionnaire is of great value for the success of the present study. Therefore, the researcher requests your genuine response to all the questions listed below.

Put tick mark (✓) in the box of your choice

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation and patience!

1. Do you think that EFL teachers have knowledge about action research?

Yes []

No []

Please explain your reason for your choice

2. How is the EFL teachers' involvement in action research?

3. Do you think that the EFL teachers have positive attitude towards action research?

Yes []

No []

Please explain your reason for your choice

4. Does the school motivate EFL teachers by giving an incentive to conduct action research?

Yes []

No []

5. If your answer for question no.4 is 'yes', how often it motivates them?

Always []

Sometimes []

Rarely []

6. Does your school provide EFL with the necessary materials to conduct action research?

Yes []

No []

7. If your answer for question no.6 is 'yes', to what extent does it provide? Please explain it.

8. Does the school have specific timetable for EFL teachers to attend and undertake action research seminar, workshop and conference?

Yes []

No []

9. Does the school help EFL teachers share experiences with the other school teachers?

Yes []

No []

a. If your answer is 'yes', how often?

Always []

Sometimes []

Rarely []

10. Do you, as a director, give recognition for action research?

Yes []

No []

11. Do you think that the EFL teachers use the action research results to improve classroom practices?

Yes []

No []

12. If your answer for question no.11 is 'yes', to what extent do they use? Please explain it.

Appendix C

Interview for EFL Teachers

Structured and non-structured interview for EFL Teachers

Dear Respondents;

The main purpose of this interview is to get relevant information on the study with the knowledge and practice of action research among EFL teachers' with particular reference to four high schools and one preparatory school of Tigray region in central zone.

The data gathered through this interview was used for the research purpose at the level of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Therefore, your genuine responses to all the questions of this interview will have of great value to the study with the knowledge of EFL teachers in conducting action research in classroom in the five schools in focus.

Before I start the interview, I would like to assure you that your name and responses was remained confidential. Accordingly, you will not be asked to tell your name during the interview is on.

Thank you for your kind co-operation in advance!

1. Do you think that you have knowledge of action research is and of how to conduct action research?
To what extent or why not?
 2. Do you have positive attitude towards action research? In what way or why not?
 3. How is your involvement in action research?
4. Does the school motivate you by giving an incentive to conduct action research in your classroom?
How often or why not?
5. Is your school conducive to conduct action research in classroom in terms of resources availability?
How or why not?
6. Does the school have specific timetable for you to attend and undertake action research, seminar, workshop and conference? How often or why not?
7. Does the school help you share experiences with the other school teachers? How or why not?
8. Do you use the action research results to improve classroom practices and create other problem areas? To what extent or why not?
9. How can you get other teachers involved in conducting action research? Let others hear your own voice!

Appendix D

Interview for Directors

Structured and non-structured interview for directors

Dear Respondents;

The main purpose of this interview is to get relevant information on the study with the knowledge and practice of action research among EFL teachers' with particular reference to four high schools and one preparatory school of Tigray region in central zone.

The data gathered through this interview was used for the research purpose at the level of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Therefore, your genuine responses to all the questions of this interview will have of great value to the study with the knowledge of EFL teachers in conducting action research in classroom in the five schools in focus.

Before I start the interview, I would like to assure you that your name and responses was remained confidential. Accordingly, you will not be asked to tell your name during the interview is on.

Thank you for your kind co-operation in advance!

1. Do you think that EFL teachers have knowledge of action research is and of how to conduct action research? To what extent or why not?
2. Do you think that the EFL teachers have positive attitude towards action research? In what way or why not?
3. How is the EFL teachers' involvement in action research?
4. Does the school motivate EFL teachers by giving an incentive to conduct action research in their classroom? How often or why not?
5. Is your school conducive to conduct action research in classroom in terms of resources availability? How or why not?
6. Does the school have specific timetable for EFL teachers to attend and undertake action research, seminar, workshop and conference? How often or why not?
7. Does the school help EFL teachers share experiences with the other school teachers? How or why not?
8. Do you as a director give recognize for action research? To what extent or why not?
9. Do you think that the EFL teachers you the action research results use to improve classroom practices and create other problem areas? To what extent or why not?

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for any degree to any university, and that all relevant sources used in the thesis have been fully acknowledged.

Name: ASEFA MEBRATU ABERA

Signature: 

Date: 08/06/2011

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name: Dr. ABEBE GEBRETSADIK

Signature: _____

Date of approval: _____